

STORY-LIVES OF  
MASTER MUSICIANS

HARRIETTE BROWER





PRISCILLA GRANT

Mongymuch.

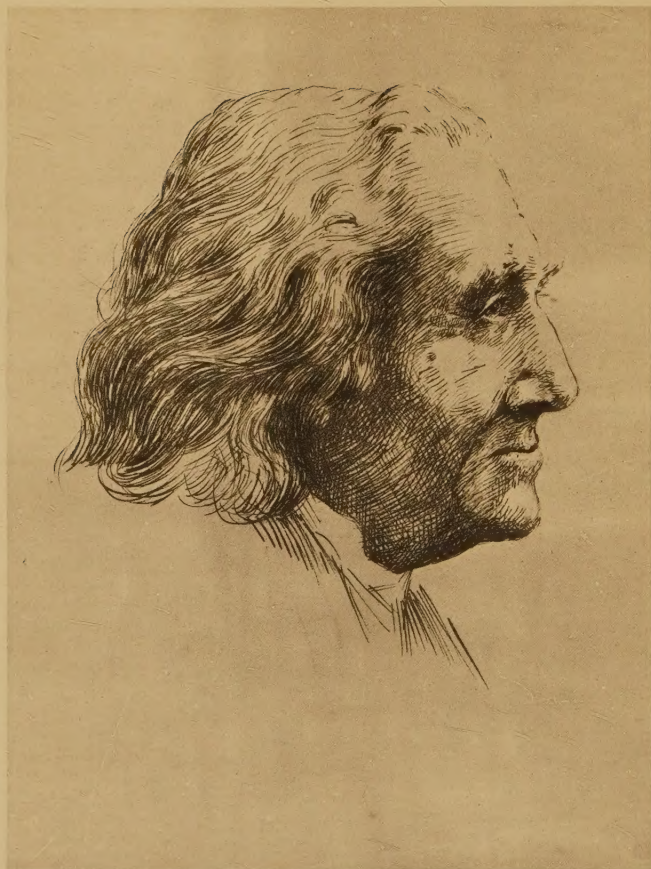




STORY-LIVES OF  
MASTER MUSICIANS







*J. Smith*



# STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

BY  
HARRIETTE BROWER



GEORGE G. HARRAP & CO. LTD.  
LONDON BOMBAY SYDNEY

*First published August 1925*  
*by GEORGE G. HARRAP & CO. LTD.*  
*39-41 Parker Street, Kingsway, London, W.C.2*  
*Reprinted January 1928*

---

*Printed in Great Britain by The Riverside Press Limited*  
*Edinburgh*

## FOREWORD

THE preparation of this volume began with a period of delightful research work in a great library of music. As a bee passes from flower to flower, extracting sweetness from many blossoms, so the compiler of these stories gathered facts from many varied sources—from biographies, letters, journals, and histories of music. Thus deeply imbued with the knowledge of the personality and individual achievement of each composer, she then endeavoured to present his life-story.

While the aim of the author has been to make these sketches of interest to young people, she hopes that they may prove of value to readers of all ages who love music. Every student of the violin, piano, or other instrument ought to know how the great composers lived. There is a wealth of inspiration and practical guidance for the artist in every career described in this book—from the old masters represented by Bach and Beethoven to the musical prophets of our own day such as Tschaikowsky and Debussy. Through the struggles, sorrows, and triumphs of these great men there came into being divine melody and harmony which will bless the world for all time.

H. B.





# CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. GIOVANNI PIERLUIGI SANTE DA PALESTRINA	11
II. JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH	17
III. GEORG FRIEDRICH HANDEL	28
IV. CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD GLUCK	41
V. JOSEF HAYDN	51
VI. WOLFGANG AMADEUS CHRYSOSTOM MOZART	65
VII. LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN	86
VIII. KARL MARIA FRIEDRICH ERNST VON WEBER	97
IX. FRANZ PETER SCHUBERT	108
X. FELIX MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY	118
XI. ROBERT SCHUMANN	132
XII. FREDERIC-FRANÇOIS CHOPIN	147
XIII. HECTOR BERLIOZ	163
XIV. FRANZ LISZT	177
XV. GIUSEPPE VERDI	192
XVI. WILHELM RICHARD WAGNER	206
XVII. CÉSAR FRANCK	222
XVIII. JOHANNES BRAHMS	231
XIX. EDVARD HAGERUP GRIEG	248
XX. PETER ILYITCH TSCHAIKOWSKY	260
XXI. EDWARD ALEXANDER MACDOWELL	271
XXII. CLAUDE-ACHILLE DEBUSSY	281
INDEX	289



## ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
FRANZ LISZT	<i>Frontispiece</i>
JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH	18
GEORG FRIEDRICH HÄNDEL	28
CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD GLUCK	42
JOSEF HAYDN	52
WOLFGANG AMADEUS CHRYSOSTOM MOZART	66
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN	86
KARL MARIA FRIEDRICH ERNST VON WEBER	98
FRANZ PETER SCHUBERT	108
FELIX MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY	118
ROBERT SCHUMANN	132
FRÉDÉRIC-FRANÇOIS CHOPIN	148
WILHELM RICHARD WAGNER	206
JOHANNES BRAHMS	232
EDVARD HAGERUP GRIEG	248
PETER ILYITCH TSCHAIKOWSKY	260





# STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

## I

GIOVANNI PIERLUIGI SANTE DA  
PALESTRINA

(c. 1526-94)

**I**N order to learn something of the life and labours of Palestrina, one of the earliest as well as one of the greatest of composers whose works have been handed down to us, we must go back in the world's history nearly four hundred years. Even then we shall not be able to trace all the events of his life, for some of the records have been lost, but happily for us the main facts remain. From them we know that Palestrina should be revered for all time as the man who strove to make sacred music the expression of lofty and spiritual meaning.

Upon a hoary spur of the Apennines stands the crumbling town of Palestrina. It is very old now; it was old when Rome was young. Four hundred years ago Palestrina was dominated by the great castle of its lords, the proud Colonnas, and naturally the town was much more important then than it is to-day. At that time there lived in Palestrina a peasant, Sante da Pierluigi, and his wife, Maria. They seem to have been an honest couple and not too poverty-stricken, for in the will of Sante's mother, which has lately been discovered, she bequeathed a house in Palestrina to her two sons; she also left a good store of bed-linen, mattresses, and cooking utensils. Sante's wife, Maria, also had a little property.

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

To this pair was born, probably in 1526, a son, whom they named Giovanni Pierluigi—or, as it would be in English, John Peter Louis. From earliest childhood this boy loved beauty of sight and sound—and this is not surprising, for a child surrounded from infancy by the natural loveliness and glory of old Palestrina could hardly help but develop an appreciation of beauty and grandeur. When he was very young it was discovered that he had a particularly sweet voice, and the mother is said to have sold some land she owned in order to provide a musical training for her son.

From the rocky heights on which their town was built the people of Palestrina could look across the Campagna and see the walls and towers of Rome. St Peter's had survived the sack of the city a dozen years before the time of our story, and Bramante's vast basilica had already begun to rise. The artistic life of Rome was still at its height, for Michelangelo was at work on his *Last Judgment* at this time, and the influence of Raphael was still strong, though twenty years had elapsed since his death.

Music, however, did not keep pace with the other arts. The leading musicians were Belgian, Spanish, or French, and their compositions did not match the great achievements attained in architecture, sculpture, and painting. It required a new impetus, a vital force, and this came into being when the peasant youth Giovanni descended from the heights of Palestrina to the banks of the Tiber.

The boy's music master in Rome is said to have been Tomasso Crinello. Whether this be true or not, he was certainly trained in the Netherland school of composition. The youth, whom we shall now call Palestrina—the name by which he is generally known, after that of his birth-place—returned in 1544 from Rome to his native town

## PALESTRINA

---

at the age of eighteen. He was now no longer a student, but a practising musician, and he took a post at the cathedral of St Agapitus, engaging himself for life to be present every day at Mass and Vespers, and to teach singing to the canons and choristers. Thus he spent the early years of his young manhood in directing the daily services and drumming the rudiments of music into the heads of the little choristers. It may have been dry and wearisome labour; but afterward when he began to reform the music of the Church it must have been of great advantage to him to know so well the liturgy, not only of St Peter's and St John Lateran, but also of the simple cathedral of his own small hill-town.

Young Palestrina, living his commonplace, busy life in his native town, never dreamed that he was destined to become a great musician. He married in 1548, when he was about twenty-two. If he had wished to secure one of the great musical appointments in Rome it was most unwise of him to have married, for in nine cases out of ten unmarried singers were preferred in the capital. But this was a love-match, and Palestrina did not seem to realize that it might be a danger to his career—perhaps he did not care. His bride Lucrezia seems to have been a wise choice, and there was the additional advantage that she had a comfortable dowry. The union was a happy one and lasted for more than thirty years.

Although Palestrina had agreed to remain for life at the cathedral of St Agapitus it seems that such contracts could be broken, for after seven years of service he once more turned his steps to the Eternal City. Here he took his place as a recognized musician, and in 1551 he was appointed maestro di capella of the Capella Giulia in the Vatican. The modest salary he received was six scudi a month, or about two pounds in English money, but the young musician seemed to be quite satisfied. Barely three

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

years afterward he wrote and printed a book containing five Masses, which he dedicated to Pope Julius III. This compliment greatly pleased the Pontiff, and in January 1555 he appointed Palestrina to a salaried post as one of the singers of the Sistine Chapel.

It seems, however, that the Sistine singers resented the appointment of a new member, and complained. Several Popes came and went about that time, and when Paul IV was elected he began at once with reforms. Finding that Palestrina and two other singers were married, he dismissed all three, though granting an annuity of six scudi a month to each. The loss of this post was a great humiliation, which Palestrina found hard to endure. He fell ill at this time, and his outlook became dark indeed, for he had now to provide for three little children as well as Lucrezia and himself.

But the clouds soon lifted. Within a few weeks after his unfortunate dismissal the rejected singer of the Sistine Chapel was created choirmaster of St John Lateran, the splendid basilica where the young Orlandus Lassus had so recently directed the music. As the salary of the new post was augmented by the modest pension granted by the Pope, Palestrina was able to establish his family in a pretty villa on the Cælian Hill, where he could be near his work at the Lateran, yet far enough removed from the turmoil of the city to obtain the quiet he desired. Here he lived in tranquillity for the next five years.

Palestrina spent forty-four years of his life in Rome, all the eleven Popes who reigned during this long period honouring him as a great musician. Marcellus II during his brief three weeks' reign showed kindness to the young composer, which he returned by entitling a famous work the *Mass of Pope Marcellus*. Pius IV, who was in power when the Mass was first heard, praised it eloquently, saying that John of Palestrina was a new John, bringing down



## PALESTRINA

---

to the Church Militant the harmonies of that "new song" which John the Apostle heard in the Holy City. The musician-Pope Gregory XIII, to whom Palestrina dedicated his greatest motets, entrusted him with the sacred task of revising the ancient chant. Pope Sixtus V greatly praised his beautiful Mass *Assumpta est Maria* and promoted him to higher honours.

With such encouragement and patronage Palestrina devoted his labours for five years to the Lateran, ten to Santa Maria Maggiore, and a further twenty-three to the Capella Giulia, where twenty years before he had received his first appointment in Rome. He was happy in his work, in his home, and in his friends. He had no financial troubles, and he was even able to save a considerable sum of money, and to buy land, vineyards, and houses in and about Rome; in 1577 it is recorded that he made a present of thirteen hundred scudi to his daughter-in-law.

Palestrina's life, however, was not all sunshine, for he suffered many domestic sorrows. One after another his three sons were taken from him, talented young men who might have achieved fame in the world of music; and in 1580 his wife died also. But amid his poignant sorrows and his worldly successes he remained essentially the same pious and simple-hearted man. At the Jubilee of Pope Gregory XIII, in 1575, when fifteen hundred pilgrims from Palestrina marched to Rome, the maidens clad in white robes and the young men bearing olive-branches, it was their old townsman, Giovanni Pierluigi Sante da Palestrina, who led their songs.

Palestrina has been called "the saviour of church music," because his compositions were the means of preventing the Fathers of the Church from banishing all music except the chant from the service. They had been led to consider this because so many secular subjects had been set to music and used in church, but at last they

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

requested Palestrina to compose a Mass in which sacred words should be heard throughout. The musician, deeply realizing his responsibility, wrote not only one, but three, each of which greatly pleased by its piety, meekness, and beautiful spirit.

Feeling more confident in his own powers, Palestrina now continued to compose Masses until he had created ninety-three in all. He wrote also many motets on the Song of Solomon, composed a *Stabat Mater* at the request of Pope Sixtus V, and also some *Lamentations*. The *Stabat Mater* was edited two hundred and fifty years later by Richard Wagner.

Palestrina's end came on February 2, 1594. He died in Rome, a devout Christian, and on his coffin were engraved the simple but noble words "Prince of Music."

## II

### JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

(1685-1750)

**M**ORE than two centuries ago, in the year 1685, one of the greatest musicians the world has ever known was born in the little town of Eisenach, which nestles at the edge of the Thuringian Forest. The long, low-roofed cottage in which Johann Sebastian Bach was born still stands, and has been carefully preserved throughout the years.

The name Bach belonged to a long line of musicians who strove to elevate the growing art of music. For nearly two hundred years there had been organists and composers in the family. Sebastian's father, Johann Ambrosius Bach, was the organist of the Lutheran church in Eisenach, and naturally he fostered a love of music in the home. It is small wonder, then, that Sebastian should have shown a fondness for music almost from infancy, and his father delighted in teaching him to play the violin.

When he was in his tenth year Sebastian lost both his parents, and he passed under the care of his brother Christoph, who was fourteen years his elder and a well-known organist in a neighbouring town. Christoph fully considered that he had done his duty to his small brother when he had taught him the clavier and sent him to the Lyceum to learn Latin, singing, and other school subjects. Apparently he was quite unaware that the child possessed musical genius of the highest order, and he constantly repressed him with his indifference and harsh treatment.

Little Sebastian suffered in silence from his coldness,

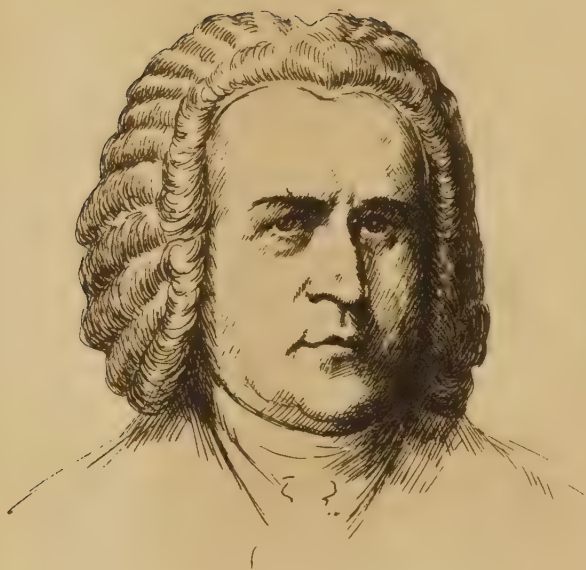
## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

but fortunately the force of his genius was too great to be crushed. He knew by heart all the simple pieces of music which his brother had taught him, and he longed to be allowed to try more ambitious tasks. Christoph was the owner of a book of manuscript music containing compositions of Buxtehude and Frohberger, famous masters of the time, and Sebastian's heart was set on learning to play these pieces. But Christoph kept the book under lock and key in his bookcase, and the child was not allowed access to it. One day he mustered up courage to ask if he might not borrow the volume for a little while, but his brother refused him angrily, telling him not to imagine that he could study such great works, and advising him to be content to master the lessons which he set him.

Fired with the injustice of this refusal, Sebastian determined to borrow the book he coveted at all costs. One moonlight night, long after every one had retired, he decided to carry out a project he had dreamed of for some time. Creeping noiselessly downstairs, he stood before the bookcase and sought out the precious volume. There it was, with the names of the musicians on the back, written in large letters in his brother's handwriting. Sebastian put his small hands between the bars and spent some time in drawing the book toward him, but he could not pull it out. At last, after many experiments, he found that one bar was weaker than the others and would bend when he put forth his strength. At last the book was in his hands. Claspings it close to his breast he hurried back to his own room and placed it on a table beside the window. The moonlight fell full upon the pages, and with pen and music-paper the child began to copy out the pieces in the book.

This was but the first of many nights of endless toil. For six months, whenever there were moonlight nights, Sebastian was to be found at the window working at his



*Johann Sebastian Bach*





## BACH

---

task with passionate eagerness. At last it was finished, and overjoyed at the thought of possessing this music for his very own Sebastian crept into bed without taking the precaution of hiding all traces of his work. The poor boy had to pay dearly for his forgetfulness! His brother Christoph had been awakened by the sounds in the neighbouring room, and came to seek the cause. As soon as he entered Sebastian's room his eyes fell upon the open books lying in the moonlight. There was no pity in the elder brother's heart when he saw all this devoted labour, only anger that he had been outwitted by the boy. He took both books away and hid them in a place where Sebastian would never be able to find them. But he did not reflect that the boy had the memory of all this beautiful music indelibly printed on his mind, and it was this which helped the child to bear the bitter disappointment of the loss of his work.

When he was fifteen Sebastian left his brother's house and entered the Latin school connected with the church of St Michael at Lüneburg. It was there found that he had a beautiful soprano voice, and he was therefore placed with the scholars who were chosen to sing in the church service in return for free education. There were two church schools in Lüneburg, and the rivalry between them was so keen that when the scholars sang in the streets during the winter months to collect money for their support, the routes for each had to be carefully marked out to prevent collision.

Soon after he had entered St Michael's Bach lost his exquisite voice, but his knowledge of the clavier and violin enabled him to remain at the school at a small salary. He worked hard at all his set musical studies, and gave his spare time to works of the best composers. He now began to realize that he cared more for the organ than for any other instrument, and in time his love for it

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

became a passion. He was too poor to take lessons, for he was almost entirely dependent on his small earnings; but though a penniless scholar, living on the plainest of fare, he was determined that somehow or other he would gain a knowledge of the music that he loved.

One of the great organists of the time was Johann Adam Reinken. When Sebastian learned that this master played the organ in St Katharine's Church in Hamburg he determined to walk the whole distance to this town to hear him, though it was twenty-five English miles from Lüneburg. Hamburg was called in those days the "Paradise of German music," and the difficulty of reaching it only made the boy more anxious to achieve his ambition.

Sebastian's great joy in listening to such a master made him forget the long tramp from Lüneburg and his weariness, and spurred him on to repeat the journey whenever he could save a few shillings to pay for food and lodgings. On one occasion he lingered a little longer than usual in Hamburg, until his money was nearly exhausted and he had before him the prospect of a long walk without any food. As he trudged along he came upon a small inn, from the open door of which came a delightful savoury odour. The hungry lad could not resist looking in through the window. At that instant a window above was opened, and a couple of herrings' heads were tossed into the road. The herring is a favourite article of food in Germany, and poor Sebastian was glad to pick up these fragments in order to satisfy his hunger. What was his surprise on pulling the heads to pieces to find that each one contained a Danish ducat! When he recovered from his astonishment he entered the inn and demanded a good meal with part of the money, reserving the remainder for another visit to Hamburg.

After staying for three years in Lüneburg Bach secured

## BACH

---

a post as violinist in the private orchestra of Prince Johann Ernst of Saxe-Weimar; but his intention was only to occupy his time profitably until he could find an opportunity of becoming an organist. And Fortune soon favoured him. In the ancient Thuringian town of Arnstadt a new church, containing a magnificent new organ, had lately been built, and the church council readily acceded to Bach's request to be allowed to try the instrument. As soon as the members of the council heard the young musician play they offered him the post, promising to increase the salary by a contribution from the town funds. Bach thus found himself at the age of eighteen installed as organist at a salary of fifty florins, with thirty thalers in addition for board and lodging—a sum that would probably equal about ten pounds of English money. In those days this would have been considered quite a handsome sum for a young player, and Bach gladly entered upon his duties on August 14, 1703, promising solemnly to be diligent and faithful in all that was required of him.

Fortunately the requirements of the post left him ample leisure for study. He had composed very little up to that time, but he now began to teach himself the art of composition. His first act was to select a number of concertos written for the violin by Vivaldi and set them for the harpsichord. In this way he learned to express himself and to put his thoughts down on paper without first trying them over on an instrument. He thus studied by himself without any outside help, and he often worked far into the night in order to perfect himself in this branch of his art.

From the very beginning Bach's playing on the new organ excited admiration, but frequently his artistic temperament threatened to be his undoing. For no sooner would he be seated at the organ to conduct the church music than he would forget that both choir and

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

congregation were dependent upon him, and he would begin to improvise at such lengths that the singing had perforce to stop. Naturally there were many disputes between the new organist and the church council, but the vagaries of the musician were overlooked because of his genius.

Bach was a trial to this well-ordered body in more ways than one. Once he asked for a month's leave of absence in order that he might visit Lübeck, where the celebrated Danish composer Buxtehude was playing the organ in the Marienkirche during Advent. Lübeck is fifty miles from Arnstadt, but the courageous boy made the entire journey on foot. Once in the town he quite forgot his promise to return in one month, so much did he enjoy the music, and he remained for three months. It was not until his pockets were quite empty that he thought of returning to his post. Of course, he was greatly censured by the authorities in Arnstadt, but he was forgiven because of his great gifts.

Bach soon began to find that his life at Arnstadt was too small and confined for his soaring desires. His fame, too, was increasing, and his name was becoming known in the larger towns of the neighbourhood. He was therefore glad to accept the post of organist at St Blasius, Mühlhausen, near Eisenach, when it was offered to him in 1707. Bach was told that he might name his own salary, and had he been avaricious he might have demanded a large sum, but he modestly named the same salary that he had received at Arnstadt with the addition of certain articles of food which he wished to have delivered free at his door.

His prospects were now so much improved that he began to think he might set up a home for himself, and on October 17, 1707, he married his cousin Maria Bach, with whom he had fallen in love in Arnstadt.

When he had been in Mühlhausen for one year Bach received an invitation to play before Duke Wilhelm



## BACH

---

Ernst of Saxe-Weimar. He accepted eagerly, hoping that this might lead to a higher appointment, and he was not disappointed. Duke Wilhelm was so much impressed with his ability that he immediately offered him the post of Court organist.

A wider outlook now revealed itself to Sebastian Bach, who had hitherto struggled with poverty and privation throughout his life. He was now able to devote a great deal of time to composition, and he at once began to write those masterpieces for the organ which have placed his name on the highest pinnacle in the temple of music.

In his comfortable Weimar home the musician strove to perfect himself in composition and also in playing the organ and harpsichord. He soon felt that he had conquered all the difficulties of both instruments, and one day he boasted to a friend that he could play any piece at sight, no matter how difficult it might be, without making a single mistake. Shortly afterward, in order to test this statement, the friend invited him to breakfast. On his harpsichord he purposely left several pieces of music, and among them one which was seemingly very simple, but in reality very difficult of performance. Bach began to try over the music while his host went out of the room to prepare their meal. All went well until he came to the difficult piece. The first few bars he played boldly and with ease, but when he came to the difficult passage he was unable to master it, and after several attempts he found he could make no headway. As his friend entered the room again, bringing the breakfast, Bach exclaimed: "You are right. One cannot play everything perfectly at sight—it is impossible!"

In 1714 Duke Wilhelm raised him to the position of conductor of the orchestra, which gave him several additional privileges. Every autumn, on his annual holiday, he visited the principal towns to give performances

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

on the organ and clavier, and in a few years he gained a great reputation both as player and composer.

On one of these tours he arrived in Dresden at the same time as a French player, Louis Marchand, who was organist to the King at Versailles and who was known throughout France as the most fashionable musician of the day. All the adulation he had received had made him conceited and overbearing; every one in the town was discussing the Frenchman's wonderful playing, and it was whispered that he had been offered an important post in Dresden. Bach's friends proposed that he should challenge Marchand to a musical contest, in order that the former should defend the artistic honour of the German nation. Both musicians were willing to perform, and the King promised to be present at the contest. The day appointed for the trial arrived, and a brilliant company assembled to hear the rival organists. Bach made his appearance in due course, but his adversary failed to show himself. After considerable delay it was discovered that Marchand, afraid of his opponent's skill, had fled the city!

In 1717, on his return from Dresden, Bach was appointed Kapellmeister to the young Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Köthen, who was an enthusiastic lover of music. At the Court Bach led a very happy and busy life, and when the Prince travelled to various towns to gratify his taste for music he would always take his organist with him.

In 1720, while Bach was accompanying his patron on a visit to Carlsbad, his wife fell ill and died in a very short time. When the musician returned to Köthen great was his grief to learn that his wife had died and been buried during his absence.

Four years later Bach married again. Anna Magdalena Wülkens, the daughter of the Court trumpeter of Weissenfels, was in every way fitted to be the wife of a musician, and the second marriage was even happier than the first.



## BACH

---

It was for Anna's pleasure that Bach composed many of the delightful dances which we now so greatly enjoy, as well as several books of studies. Bach also wrote a large number of musical exercises for his sons, some of whom later followed out the Bach tradition, becoming good musicians and composers.

Perhaps no man ever led a more crowded life, though outwardly it was uneventful. Bach never had an idle moment. When he was not playing, composing, or teaching he would be found engraving music on copper, since such work was very costly in those days; or he would be busy on the manufacture of some kind of musical instrument. At least two are known to be of his invention.

After he had spent six years at the Court Bach began to realize that although he had plenty of leisure for studying he had not the scope he required for his art. Moreover, the Prince had lately married, and for the time being his love of music seemed to have waned. The wider opportunity which he desired came to Bach when he was appointed director of music in the churches of St Thomas and St Nicholas in Leipzig, and cantor of the Thomasschule in the same town. This marks the last stage of his career, for he retained these posts until the time of his death. Here he worked unceasingly, despite many obstacles and petty restrictions, in his efforts to train the boys successfully and to raise their standard of musical efficiency, as the choirs of St Thomas and St Nicholas were both recruited from the ranks of the Thomasschule.

During the twenty-seven years which he lived in Leipzig Bach wrote some of his greatest works, among others the oratorios of *St Matthew* and *St John*, and the Mass in B Minor. It was this oratorio of *St Matthew* that Mendelssohn discovered about a century later, studied with great zeal, and performed in Berlin with great devotion and success.

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

Bach's life was always marked by his love of quiet and retirement; simplicity was the keynote of his character. Deeply religious himself, his greatest works express the noblest sentiments of exaltation.

The following little incident admirably illustrates Bach's modest and retiring disposition. His third son, Karl Philipp Emanuel, was cembalist to Frederick the Great, who was exceedingly fond of music, and even played the flute himself. On several occasions the King intimated to Karl Philipp that he would like to receive his father at Court, but the elder Bach never put in an appearance. At last his Majesty sent him an imperative command which he could not disobey, and Bach immediately set out for Potsdam with his son Friedmann.

The evening's music was about to begin when the King learned of Bach's arrival. With a smile he turned to his musicians, saying: "Gentlemen, old Bach has come!" and he immediately sent for the composer before he had had time even to change his travelling dress. Frederick received him with great kindness and respect, and he personally conducted him through the palace, showing him the various Silbermann pianofortes which he possessed. Bach improvised on each, and the King gave him a theme which he treated as a fantasia, to the great astonishment and admiration of all. Frederick next asked him to play a six-part fugue, and Bach immediately improvised one on a theme of his own. The King clapped his hands, exclaiming over and over again; "Only one Bach! Only one Bach!" It was a great evening for the master, and one which he never forgot.

In 1750 Bach completed his great work *The Art of the Fugue*, and shortly after this he became totally blind. This misfortune was due in part to the great strain which he had always imposed upon his eyes in writing out his own music and in copying out with his own hand large

## BACH

---

works of the older masters. But Bach continued to work to the very last, in spite of his overwhelming affliction. On the morning of July 28, 1750, Bach suddenly recovered his sight. A few hours later he became unconscious, and in a merciful oblivion he passed out of this life.

Bach was laid to rest in the churchyard of St John's at Leipzig, two days afterward. There is no stone to mark his grave, and it is only from the town library register that we know of the burial of Johann Sebastian Bach, musical director of the Thomasschule, on July 30, 1750. But the memory of Bach is enduring, his fame immortal, and the love of his beautiful music increases with the passing of the years.

### III

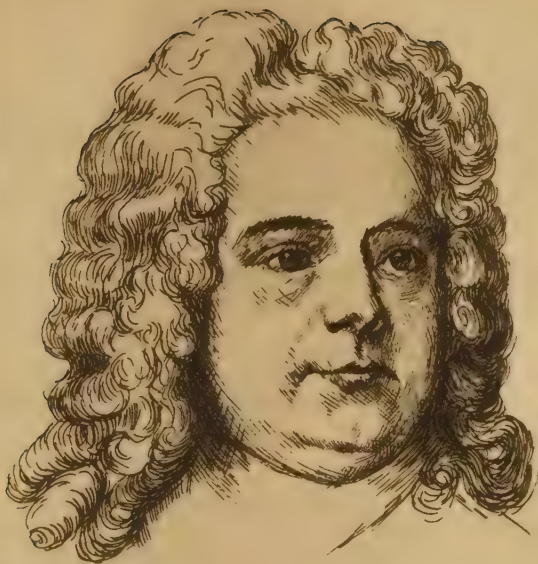
## GEORG FRIEDRICH HÄNDEL

(1685-1759)

**W**HILE little Sebastian Bach was working at his self-imposed task of copying out music-scores by moonlight, another child of the same age might have been seen seated at an old spinet in a lumber-room trying to coax music from its half-dumb keys. He had never been taught how to play, but his inborn genius guided the childish hands into finding the right notes and into making many melodies upon the old instrument.

This boy's name was Georg Friedrich Händel, but as in later years he always signed himself "G. F. Handel" the German spelling of his name is seldom used nowadays, and we may therefore speak of him as George Frederick Handel.

George was born on February 23, 1685, at No. 4 Grosser Schlamm, Halle, in Saxony. His father was an elderly surgeon, and his mother, the doctor's second wife, was a sweet and gentle woman much younger than her husband, who seems to have ruled his household with a rod of iron. Almost from babyhood the child seems to have shown a remarkable love of music, and the only toys in which he took any pleasure were those which produced musical sounds. Certainly he did not inherit this taste from his father, for Dr Handel looked on music with contempt and thought it beneath the notice of a gentleman. He had made up his mind that his son was to be a lawyer, and he would not allow him to go to school



*Georg Friedrich Händel*





## HANDEL

---

lest his love of music should be discovered and encouraged by his teachers.

When little George was about five years old a friend who sympathized with his longing for music sent him a spinet without Dr Handel's knowledge. It was promptly hidden in a corner of an old garret, and here the child loved to betake himself when he could escape the attention of his elders. Often at night, when the whole household was asleep, he would steal away into the garret and play upon the spinet, mastering its difficulties one by one. It was only a tiny tinkle that he produced, for in order to deaden the tell-tale sounds he was obliged to muffle the instrument with a cloth. A considerable time elapsed before George's secret was discovered, but at last one night his hiding-place was found out. He had been missed, and the whole house had gone in search of him. Finally his father, holding high a lantern in his hand, and followed by his wife and the servants, mounted the garret stairs—and there they saw the lost child seated at his beloved spinet, quite unconscious of the outside world. There is no record of an angry outburst on the father's part, and it is possible that after this discovery the child was allowed to pursue his solitary studying in peace.

One day when George was seven years old Dr Handel made his preparations to visit his elder son, a stepbrother of George, who was *valet de chambre* to the Duke of Saxe-Weissenfels. Little George begged to be allowed to accompany his father to the ducal castle, for he had often heard of the music that was played there, but his pleadings met with a decided refusal. The small boy, however, was determined to hear some of this music, even if he had to go on foot every step of the way to the castle—he had no idea, of course, that it was a distance of about forty miles. With this purpose he waited until his father had entered the coach, and as he rode off George ran bravely after it.

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

The roads were rough and muddy, it quickly became impossible for his little legs to keep pace with the horses, and very soon his strength began to fail. At last he called out to the coachman to stop, and on hearing the voice of his son Dr Handel put his head out of the window. Instead of being angry with the young scamp and giving him a sound scolding, he took pity upon his woebegone appearance and allowed the boy to continue his journey with him in the coach.

At the castle George spent a delightful holiday. The musicians were very kind to him, and his happiness knew no bounds when he was given permission to try the beautiful organ in the chapel. The organist stood behind him to arrange the stops, and George played upon the keys that drew forth music from the big pipes. During his stay he was several times allowed to play on this organ, and on one notable occasion the organist lifted him upon the bench at the close of a Sunday service and bade him make music. The Duke and all those round him remained to listen to the young prodigy. At the close of his performance the Duke asked: "Who is that child? Does anyone know his name?" He sent for the organist, who brought his young *protégé* with him. The Duke patted George on the head, praised his playing, and said that he was sure that some day he would become a great musician. He was much astonished to hear from the organist that George's father disapproved of music, and he promptly sent for Dr Handel. When the surgeon arrived he said to him that it would be unworthy of his honourable profession to place any obstacles in the way of so gifted a child, and he won his consent to allow the boy to study music in earnest.

It was thus settled that George should follow a musical career. He was placed under the tuition of Friedrich Zachau, the organist of the cathedral at Halle, who

## HANDEL

---

taught him how to play upon the organ, harpsichord, and violin. He also taught him composition, and showed him how countries and composers differed in their ideas of musical style. Very soon George began to compose the regular weekly service for the church, and whenever Zachau was absent he played the organ in his stead. At this time he could not have been more than eight years old.

At the end of three years of hard work Zachau informed his pupil that he had taught him all he could and that he must now seek another master. The boy was therefore sent to Berlin to continue his studies. At that time two of the most celebrated musicians in Berlin were the Italians Ariosti and Buononcini. The former received George kindly, and gave him every encouragement, but Buononcini took a dislike to the little fellow and tried to injure his career. One day, in the presence of the Elector, Buononcini pretended to test George's ability by asking him to play at sight a very difficult piece for the harpsichord which he had composed. The boy immediately played it with ease and correctness. Instead of harming him, Buononcini had thus demonstrated the boy's genius, and the Elector was delighted with him. He offered him a place at Court and even promised to send him to Italy to pursue his studies. Both offers were refused, and George soon afterward returned to Halle and to his old master Zachau, who was glad to have his pupil with him again.

Not long after this Dr Handel died. There was very little money left to support the widow, and George at once decided that he must now earn his own living. He obtained the position of deputy-organist at the cathedral and castle of Halle, and a few years later when the organist's post became vacant he secured it at a salary of less than eight pounds a year and free lodging. He was

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

now seventeen years old and longed for a broader field. Knowing that he must leave his native town to obtain it, he bade his mother good-bye, and in January 1703 set out for Hamburg to seek his fortune.

The orchestra of the Opera House at Hamburg was at this time in need of a supplementary violinist. It was a very minor post, but George accepted it as though it were fully equal to his abilities. An occasion soon arose when he was able to show his superior gifts. One day the conductor, who always presided at the harpsichord, was absent, and there was no one to take his place. Without delay George came forward and took the vacant seat. He conducted so ably that the post was given to him to hold permanently.

The young musician now led a very busy life in Hamburg, his time being fully occupied in teaching, studying, and composing. As his fame increased he obtained more pupils, and he was able not only to support himself, but to send money home to his mother. He believed in saving money whenever he could; he knew that in order to produce true works of art a man should not only be self-supporting, but should have a certain amount of independent means as well.

Handel now began to turn his attention to the composition of operas, and early in January 1705 his *Almira*, *Queen of Castile* was produced in Hamburg. It met with a success which encouraged him to write other operas, but although he composed about forty more these are remembered now only by an occasional aria.

For several years Handel had been looking forward with keen anticipation to visiting Italy, and he decided that the time had come for him to carry out his cherished project. He remained for some time in Florence, and his opera *Rodrigo*, which he composed there, met with a favourable reception. While in Venice he produced the



## HANDEL

---

opera *Agrippina*, which was received with even greater enthusiasm. Rome especially delighted him, and he returned to this city for a second time in 1709. Here his first oratorio, the *Resurrection*, was composed and produced.

In 1710 Handel returned to Germany. The Elector of Hanover held him in high esteem and offered him the post of Kapellmeister with a salary of fifteen hundred crowns and leave to travel. This Handel accepted, and he determined soon to fulfil his desire to visit England. First, however, he made a short stay in Halle, in order to visit his widowed mother and his old master Zachau. We can well imagine the joy of their meeting, and their pride and happiness in the success of the young musician.

When Handel eventually came to London in November 1710 he was preceded by the fame of his successes in Italy. Italian opera was the musical vogue of the moment in the English capital, but it was so badly produced that it required a man of Handel's genius to set it properly before the public. He had not been long on English soil before he produced his opera *Rinaldo* at the Queen's Theatre, Haymarket. Although he had taken only two weeks over the composition of this opera it met with great success and was performed night after night to enthusiastic audiences. There are many beautiful airs in *Rinaldo*, some of which, such as "*Lascia ch'io pianga*" and "*Cara sposa!*" are still highly appreciated to-day. Handel had been welcomed with great cordiality by the music-loving people of London, and his new opera now firmly established him in their regard. He seems, too, to have had a sincere affection for England, and though he returned in due course to his duties in Hanover he felt that hereafter London was to be the field for his activities.

Not very long after his return to Germany Handel sought another leave of absence to visit England, promising to return within a "reasonable time." London

received him with open arms, and many great people showered favours upon him. Lord Burlington invited him to his residence in Piccadilly, which in those days stood amid green fields, and the only return expected of the musician for this hospitality was that he should conduct the Earl's chamber concerts. Handel devoted his abundant leisure to composition, at which he worked with great ardour. His fame was now making rapid progress, and when the Peace of Utrecht had been signed and a Thanksgiving Service was to be held in St Paul's Cathedral Handel was commissioned to write a *Te Deum* and a *Jubilate*. To show her appreciation of his work, and in honour of the event, Queen Anne awarded Handel a life pension of two hundred pounds a year.

The death of Queen Anne in 1714 brought the Elector of Hanover to England as her successor to the throne. King George I naturally did not look with favour on his former Kapellmeister, who had deserted his post in Germany for so long. But an opportunity soon arose for Handel to placate his Majesty. A royal entertainment had been arranged, with decorated barges on the Thames and an orchestra to furnish the music. Handel was commissioned by the Lord Chamberlain to compose some music for the fête, and he wrote a delightful series of pieces, since known as the *Water Music*, which so greatly pleased the King that he asked for its repetition. When the monarch had learned that Handel was conducting in person he sent for him, forgave all, and granted him a further pension of two hundred pounds. He also appointed him teacher of music to the daughters of the Prince of Wales at a salary of two hundred pounds a year, and with his combined salaries amounting to six hundred pounds Handel now felt himself to be quite independent, if not a man of means.

Shortly after this Handel was appointed chapel-master



## HANDEL

---

to the Duke of Chandos, and he was expected to take up his residence at The Cannons, the magnificent mansion near Edgware in which his patron lived. Here the composer spent his days in playing the organ in the chapel, composing church music for the services, and in writing his first English oratorio of *Esther*. This was performed in the ducal chapel, and on this occasion his patron made him a present of a thousand pounds.

During his residence with the Duke of Chandos Handel made numerous compositions for the harpsichord, and among them the air and variations known as *The Harmonious Blacksmith*. Tradition has it that Handel was once walking to The Cannons through the village of Edgware when he was overtaken by a heavy shower and sought shelter in the smithy. The blacksmith was singing at his work, and his hammer was keeping time with his song. The composer was struck with the air and its accompaniment, and as soon as he reached home he wrote down the tune with its variations. This story has often been disputed, and it is not known whether or no it is true.

When Handel first came to London he had done much to encourage the production of opera in the Italian style. Later these productions had to be given up for lack of money, and the King's Theatre remained closed for a long time. Finally a number of rich men formed a society for the revival of opera in London, and the King subscribed liberally to the venture. Handel was at once engaged as composer and impresario. He immediately set to work on a new opera, and when he had it well under way he left England for Dresden to select some singers for it. On his return journey he visited Halle, where his mother was still living, but his old teacher Zachau was by this time dead.

The new opera, *Radamisto*, was ready early in 1720, and it was produced at the Royal Academy of Music, as

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

the theatre was now called. The success of this production was tremendous. But Handel, by his own self-will, had stirred up envy and jealousy, and an opposition party was formed, headed by his old enemy from Hamburg, Buononcini, who had come to London to try his fortune. A test opera was planned, of which Handel wrote the third act, Buononcini the second, and a third musician the first. When the new work was performed the judges pronounced the third act as infinitely superior to the second. Buononcini's friends, however, would not accept defeat, and the battle between the parties now raged violently. The newspapers rang with it, and many verses were written on this subject. Handel, meanwhile, cared not one whit for all the tempest, and calmly continued with his work.

In 1723 Handel had arranged for the production of his opera *Ottone*, and the great singer Cuzzoni had been engaged to take the leading part. The capricious lady, however, did not arrive in England until the rehearsals were far advanced, and this naturally incensed the composer. Furthermore, when she finally did appear, she refused to sing the aria as Handel had composed it. Flying into a violent rage, the musician seized her by the arm and threatened to throw her out of the window unless she obeyed him. So greatly did he intimidate the singer that she sang as he directed—and the result was that the aria became a great success.

Handel's industry in composing for the Royal Academy of Music was untiring. During the first eight years that followed the formation of the society he composed and produced no fewer than fourteen operas. But all this time his enemies never ceased in their efforts to ruin him. The great expense of operatic production, the troubles and quarrels with singers, at last brought the Academy to the end of its resources. At this juncture the famous

## HANDEL

---

*Beggar's Opera*, by John Gay, was produced at a rival theatre. It was a collection of most beautiful melodies gathered from various sources and used with words which were quite unworthy of them. But the fickle public hailed the new opera with delight, and its success was the means of bringing total failure to the Royal Academy. Handel, however, in spite of the schemes of his enemies, was determined to carry on the work with his own private fortune. He again travelled to Italy, this time to engage new singers, and on his way stopped at Halle to see his mother, who was ill. She died in the following year at the age of eighty.

For several years Handel now struggled to keep alive in London the love of Italian opera, despite the lack of musical taste then prevalent, and the opposition of his enemies. But in 1737 he had to admit his failure. He was now plunged deeply in debt, his whole fortune of ten thousand pounds had been lost, and his health was broken by anxiety. Still he would not give in, and after a brief rest he returned to London to renew the conflict. But the effort to reawaken the public interest in Italian opera seemed useless, and at last the composer gave up the struggle.

Handel was now fifty-five, and he began to think of turning his attention to more serious work. He has often been called "the father of the oratorio" and he composed at least twenty-eight of these works. Chief of these are *Samson*, *Israel in Egypt*, *Jephtha*, *Saul*, *Judas Maccabæus*, and—greatest of all—the *Messiah*.

It was in 1741 that Handel conceived the idea of writing the *Messiah*. Toward the end of this year he was invited to Ireland to make known some of his works there. On the way he was detained for several days at Chester owing to adverse winds. He must then have had the score of the *Messiah* with him, for during his enforced

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

sojourn at Chester he gathered together some choir-boys to try over a few of the choral parts. "Can you sing at sight?" was the question he put to each boy before he was asked to sing. One of the choristers broke down at the very start. "What de devil you mean?" cried the impetuous composer, snatching the music from him; "didn't you say you could sing at sight?" "Yes, sir," replied the quaking boy, "but not at *first* sight!"

At Dublin Handel was warmly welcomed by the people, and on April 13, 1742, at Music Hall, he produced his now famous *Messiah*. The choirs of both cathedrals united in singing the new oratorio, and the composer played some concertos on the organ. A sum of four hundred pounds was realized at this single performance and given to charity, and a second performance was announced to take place shortly. So great were the crowds desiring admittance that ladies were requested to come without their crinolines and thus to provide a hundred more seats than had been available at the first production.

The Irish people were so cordial that Handel remained with them for almost a year, and it was not until March 23, 1743, that the *Messiah* was performed in London. The King himself was one of the great audience that gathered to hear this work. All were so deeply affected by the "Hallelujah Chorus" that when the opening words "For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth" resounded through the building the whole audience, including the King, rose to their feet and remained standing during the whole chorus. From that time to the present day it has always remained the custom to stand during the singing of this impressive chorus.

Once Handel had turned his attention to oratorio one composition after another flowed from his pen, though none of them proved to be as exalted in conception as the

## HANDEL

---

*Messiah*. His last work of this kind was *Jephtha*, which contains the beautiful song "Waft her, angels." It was while engaged in the composition of this oratorio that Handel became blind—but even this overwhelming misfortune could not lessen his love of work. He was now sixty-eight, and he had conquered and lived down most of the hostility that had been so bitter at the beginning of his career. His fortunes were also constantly improving, and at his death, six years later, he left the large sum of twenty thousand pounds.

Handel's last appearance in public was at a performance of the *Messiah* at Covent Garden, on April 6, 1759. His death occurred on the 14th of the same month, at the house in Brook Street which had been his home for many years. Thus, while he had been born in the same year as Sebastian Bach, he outlived this contemporary genius by about a decade. He was buried with fitting honours in Westminster Abbey, and later on a fine monument was erected to his memory. The greater part of his original manuscripts came into the possession of King George III and are to this day preserved in the music library of Buckingham Palace.

Both physically and mentally the great composer was a big man. A friend described his countenance as being full of fire. "When he smiled," he declared, "it was like the sun bursting out of a black cloud. It was a sudden flash of intelligence, wit, and good humour, which illuminated his countenance, which I have hardly ever seen in any other."

Handel could appreciate a joke and had a keen sense of humour. Few things outside his work interested him, but he was fond of the theatre, and he liked to attend picture sales. His fiery temper often led him to explode at trifles, and he could not brook any talking among his audience while he was conducting. He did not hesitate



## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

to visit violent abuse on the heads of those who ventured to speak while he was directing one of his compositions, and not even the presence of royalty could then restrain his anger. He was always generous in assisting those who required his aid, and he helped largely to found the Society for Aiding Distressed Musicians.



#### IV

### CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD GLUCK

(1714-87)

GLUCK has often been called "the regenerator of the opera," for his appearance as a composer came at a critical time when he was able to rescue the opera from the deplorable depths into which it had fallen. During his early youth the composers often yielded to the caprices of the singers and wrote to suit their demands, which were frequently inspired by vanity and ignorance, and thus the opera itself often became ridiculous. Gluck's desire was to "restrict the art of music to its true object, that of aiding the effect of poetry by giving greater expression to words and scenes, without interrupting the action or the plot." His writings consist of operas only, and some of his best works are produced on the stage to-day. They are simple in design, yet powerful in their appeal, and they are noted for their refinement, originality, and deep sentiment.

Like many another boy who later became a great musician, Gluck had a sorrowful childhood, full of poverty and neglect. He was born on July 2, 1714, in the little town of Weidenwang, on the borders of Bohemia. His parents were in very straitened circumstances, and though the child early showed a marked love of music they were unable to pay for a musical education for him. Fortunately, however, at the public school which he attended the reading of music from notes, the formation of scales, and other elements of music were taught as ordinary school subjects.

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

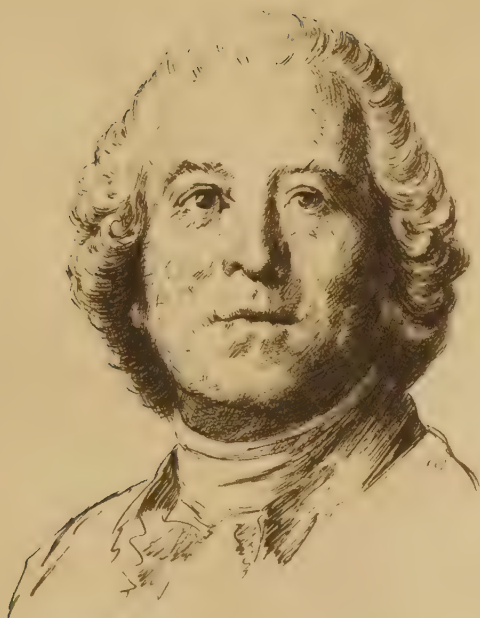
---

During his father's lifetime the boy was always assured of sympathy and affection, but he died when Christoph was quite young; then began a period of increasing neglect, until finally the boy was left to fend for himself. But perseverance and the will to succeed were as much inherent in Gluck as his great talent. He now began to teach himself to play the violoncello, which greatly attracted him, his only master being an old instruction-book. His determination of character overcame many almost insurmountable difficulties, and before long he had made sufficient progress to enable him to join a troupe of travelling minstrels.

From Prague the musicians made their way to Vienna, then a rich, gay, laughter-loving city, where the people greatly appreciated and encouraged the art of music. Gluck's pronounced musical talent, together with his forlorn appearance and poor circumstances, aroused the sympathy of a few generous souls, who not only gave him a home and provided him with his material needs, but also gave him the means to continue his musical studies. The youth was overcome with gratitude and made the best possible use of his opportunities. For nearly two years he devoted his entire life to his musical education.

Gluck had always felt a strong desire to visit Italy, and in 1738 an opportunity arose for him to realize his ambition. He was twenty-four when he bade farewell to his many friends in Vienna and set out to complete his studies in Milan. Soon after his arrival he had the good fortune to meet Padre Martini, the famous master of musical theory, and he immediately placed himself under the great man's guidance. Martini gave him a careful training for about four years, the thoroughness of which can be traced in even the first of Gluck's attempts at operatic composition.

At the end of this long period of diligent study Gluck



*Gluck*



## GLUCK

---

began the writing of his opera *Artaxerxes*. On its completion it was accepted by the Milan Theatre, and produced with great success in 1741. Following this achievement he was offered an engagement in Venice by one of the managers of the theatre there on condition that he should compose a new opera. *Clytemnestra* was the result of this agreement. This second work was enthusiastically received, and led to the production of the third, *Demetrio*, which also won universal applause.

Gluck was now offered several engagements in Turin, and for the next two years he divided his time between that city and Milan, producing five or six new operas for their enjoyment. By this time his fame had spread throughout Italy and even to the countries beyond, and tempting offers for the production of new operas reached him from all sides. Especially anxious was a certain Lord Middlesex that the young composer should visit London and produce some of his works at the King's Theatre in the Haymarket. Gluck felt that he must accept the generous offer of Lord Middlesex, and in 1745 he left his beloved Italy for England. Unfortunately the Scottish rebellion of that year had caused so great a confusion among the people of London that the theatres and places of entertainment were closed, and the public had little heart for music. Lord Middlesex felt that the chance to hear the great composer who had travelled so far at his request was one that should not be lost, and he besought the authorities to reopen the theatre. Finally his request was granted.

Gluck's opening opera, entitled *La Caduta de' Giganti* (The Fall of the Giants), which had been written with the set purpose of introducing his style to the English public, was a failure. Undaunted by his lack of success, the composer wrote a second opera, *Artamene*, but this met with an equally chilly reception. The truth was that the minds of the people at that time were naturally engrossed

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

in politics and political events, and music and the other arts had to take a very subsidiary place in their thoughts. In addition to this Handel was now at the height of his fame, and was living in London, honoured and courted by the world of fashion, and he denounced the works of his contemporary.

Though greatly disappointed at the reception of his operas, Gluck remained in England for several years, continually producing new works, none of which met with public approval. At last he returned to Vienna. In 1754 Gluck was invited to visit Rome, and while there he produced several operas—among them *Antigone*—which were greatly appreciated by the Italians. He now proceeded to Florence, where he made the acquaintance of the poet Raniero da Calzabigi. They were mutually attracted, and on parting took a vow to use their influence and talents in the reformation of Italian opera.

Gluck now returned to Vienna, where he continued to compose new works. In 1764 he produced *Orfeo*—an example of the new reform in opera. It was most favourably received, and was performed twenty-eight times, which in those days was a very long run. The singing and acting of Guadagni made the opera the fashion in musical circles, and in Parma, Paris, and London it became the general favourite.

At this time the composer was fifty years of age, and with the exception of *Orfeo* his greatest works were not yet written. It was now that he began to develop that purity of style which is so marked in his *Alceste*, *Iphigénie en Tauride*, and other later works. *Alceste* was the second opera on the reformed plan which simplified the music in order to give greater prominence to the poetry, and the text was written by Calzabigi. It was produced in Vienna in 1769.

*Alceste* was greatly in advance of *Orfeo* in both simplicity



and nobility, yet somehow it failed to please the critics. The disappointed composer expressed himself thus on their opinions: "Pedants and critics, an infinite multitude, form the greatest obstacle to the progress of art. They think themselves entitled to pass a verdict on *Alceste* from some informal rehearsals, badly conducted and executed. Some fastidious ear found a vocal passage too harsh, or another too impassioned, forgetting that forcible expression and striking contrasts are absolutely necessary. It was likewise decided in full conclave that this style of music was barbarous and extravagant."

In spite of the condemnation of the critics *Alceste* greatly added to Gluck's fame. Paris wanted to see the man who had revolutionized Italian opera. The French Académie Royale begged him to visit the capital and to make his *début* there with a new opera. Du Rollet, a French poet living in Vienna, offered to write a libretto for the new composition, and assured him that it would have every chance of success in France. He thereupon wrote the libretto, or rather arranged it from Racine's *Iphigénie en Aulide*, and armed with this the Chevalier Gluck, lately made knight of the Papal order of the Golden Spur, set out for Paris.

And now the composer entered upon a long period of hard work. The composition of the opera *Iphigénie* meant almost a year's labour, and he had also to make a careful study of the French language. But the ignorant, careless orchestra gave him infinitely more trouble than the language. The members of the orchestra declared that they did not approve of foreign music, and Gluck would have felt very much aggrieved had it not been for the approval and support of his former pupil and patroness, the charming Marie Antoinette, who became Queen of France in 1774.

After many trials and delays *Iphigénie* was produced

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

on August 19, 1774, and proved an enormous success. The beautiful Queen herself gave the signal for applause, in which the whole house joined. The attractive Sophie Arnould took the name-part of the opera and seemed to satisfy all the requirements of the composer. Agamemnon was played by Larrivée, and this seems also to have been well sung. The French were thoroughly delighted. They praised and fêted Gluck, declaring that he had discovered the music of the ancient Greeks, and that he was the one man in the whole of Europe who could properly express feeling in music. Marie Antoinette wrote to her sister : " We had, on the nineteenth, the first performance of Gluck's *Iphigénie*, and it was a glorious triumph. I was quite enchanted, and nothing else is talked of. All the world wishes to see the piece, and Gluck seems well satisfied."

In the following year, 1775, Gluck brought out an adaptation of *Alceste* suitable for the French stage, and this also aroused the greatest enthusiasm. The theatre was filled to overflowing at every performance ; the composer was again highly lauded, and he was acclaimed to be the greatest composer living.

But Gluck had one powerful opponent at the Court. This was none other than the famous Madame du Barry, the favourite of Louis XV. Madame du Barry wished to have her pet musical composer, even as the Queen had hers ; an Italian herself by birth, she wished, too, to oppose the Austrian Gluck. She considered that she had listened to his praises long enough, and the overwhelming success of *Alceste* was for her the climax. She now insisted that there ought to be some one to represent Italian music at Court, and applied to the Italian ambassador to ask Piccinni to come to Paris.

As soon as Piccinni had arrived at the capital Madame du Barry began to carry out a determined opposition

## GLUCK

---

against Gluck. She gathered around her a powerful Italian party, whose first act was to induce the Grand Opera management to make Piccinni an offer for a new opera, although they had already made a similar offer to Gluck. This breach of good faith on the part of the management led to a furious war among all the music-lovers in Paris, which was fierce and bitter while it lasted. Even the burning political questions were forgotten for the time being. The Press divided into camps, part taking one side, part the other. Many pamphlets, poems, and satires, in which both composers were unmercifully attacked, were published.

At the time the wordy war began Gluck was in Germany. Piccinni had come to Paris principally to secure the tempting fee offered to him, not to take part in the strife. But the leaders of the strange warfare kept the interest of the feud at such a pitch that a stranger could not enter a *café*, hotel, or theatre without first answering the question whether he were a Gluckist or a Piccinnist. Many foolish lies were circulated about Gluck in his absence. His enemies declared that he had gone to Germany to escape criticism, and that since his talent was exhausted he could no longer write melodies and he had nothing more to give to France.

One evening when false and lying rumours such as this were being passed from mouth to mouth the Abbé Arnaud, who was one of Gluck's most ardent supporters, declared in an aristocratic company that the Chevalier was returning to France with an *Orlando* and an *Armide* in his portfolio. "Piccinni is also working on an *Orlando*," spoke up a follower of that redoubtable Italian. "That will be all the better," returned the Abbé, "for we shall then have an *Orlando* and also an *Orlandino*."

When Gluck returned to Paris he brought with him the finished opera of *Armide*, which was produced at the

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

Grand Opera House on September 23, 1777. At first it was merely a *succès d'estime*, but soon it became immensely popular. On the first night many of the critics condemned the opera as being too noisy. The composer, however, felt that he had put some of his best work into *Armide* and that the music was written in such a style that it would not grow out of date for a very long time. He had taken the greatest pains in its composition, and he declared that if it were not properly rehearsed at the Opera he would not allow them to perform it at all, but would retain the work for his own personal enjoyment. He wrote to a friend: "I have put forth what little strength is left in me into *Armide*; I confess I should like to finish my career with it."

*Armide* is said to have been written by Gluck in order to praise the beauty of Marie Antoinette, and it is certain that the ill-fated Queen showed the deepest interest in its success. Gluck often told her that "he arranged his music according to the impression it made upon the Queen."

"Great as was the success of *Armide*," wrote the Princesse de Lamballe, "no one prized this beautiful work more highly than the composer of it. He was passionately enamoured of it; he told the Queen that the air of France had rejuvenated his creative powers, and the sight of her Majesty had given such a wonderful impetus to the flow of ideas that his composition had become like herself, angelic, sublime."

The growing success of *Armide* only added fuel to the flames of the controversy between the supporters of the two composers. And now Piccinni capped his rival's performance, for the opera which he had just completed was produced and met with a brilliant reception. Indeed, much to the delight of the Piccinnists, its success was greater than that won by *Armide*. Of course, the natural

## GLUCK

---

outcome of this was that the Gluckists now wished their hero to surpass this latest work. Marie Antoinette was besought to prevail on her favourite to write another opera.

A new director was now in charge of the Opera House. He conceived the idea of setting the two composers at work on the same subject, which was to be *Iphigénie en Tauride*. This plan made great commotion in the ranks of the rival factions, as each wished to have the work of its particular composer performed first. The director promised that Piccinni's should be placed first in order of rehearsal. Gluck soon finished his opera and gave it to the director, but the Italian composer was untroubled when he heard this news, trusting to the director's word of honour and hoping to complete his own work very shortly. A few days later, when he went to the Opera House with his completed score, he was horrified to find the work of his rival already in rehearsal. There was a lively scene, but the manager said he had been ordered to produce the work of Gluck first, and he had perforce to obey. On May 18, 1779, the Gluck opera was performed amid tense excitement, and it was a marvellous success. Even Piccinni succumbed to the spell of the music, for it made such an impression upon him that he wished to have his own work withdrawn from the theatre. But the director insisted, and the second *Iphigénie* appeared shortly afterward. The first night it met with but scanty applause; the second proved a tragi-comedy, for the prima donna was intoxicated! She was imprisoned for two days, but afterward returned to the stage and sang well. But the war between the two factions continued in its bitterness until the death of Gluck and the retirement of Piccinni.

In September 1780 Gluck finished a new opera, *Echo et Narcisse*, and with this work decided to close his career,



## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

feeling that he was now too old to write for the lyric stage. He was then nearly seventy, and he withdrew to Vienna to rest and enjoy the fruits of his long life of incessant toil. By this time he was a rich man, for he had earned nearly thirty thousand pounds. Kings and princes came to honour him and to show their gratitude for the pleasure his music had brought them.

Gluck passed away on November 15, 1787, honoured and beloved by all who knew him. But his beautiful and expressive music remains with us as our heritage, and the "Michael of music" speaks to us still in his operas, whenever they are adequately performed.



## V

### JOSEF HAYDN

(1732-1809)

**I**N Josef Haydn we have one of many of the great musicians who have suffered privations and hardships in early life, but who have risen to positions of honour among the elect as a result of their own industrious efforts.

Fifteen leagues south of Vienna, in the marshy ground beside the River Leitha, lies the small village of Rohrau. At the end of the straggling street that runs through the village there once used to stand a low thatched cottage, and next to it was a wheelwright's shop with a small patch of greensward before it. The master wheelwright who lived in the cottage and worked in the shop was Mathias Haydn, a very worthy and religious man. In addition to his ordinary work he also acted as sexton to the little church on the hill.

Mathias Haydn had a deep love of music, which was shared by his wife Maria. Every Sunday evening he would bring out his harp, on which he had taught himself to play, and accompany his wife and children while they sang their songs and hymns. The little boy Josef would sit near his father, watching his playing with rapt attention. Sometimes he would take two sticks and pretend to play a violin as he had seen the village schoolmaster play on this instrument. And when he sang hymns with the others his childish voice rang sweet and true.

Little Josef had been born on March 31, 1732. His mother had a secret ambition that Josef should join the priesthood, but his father, watching the child with

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

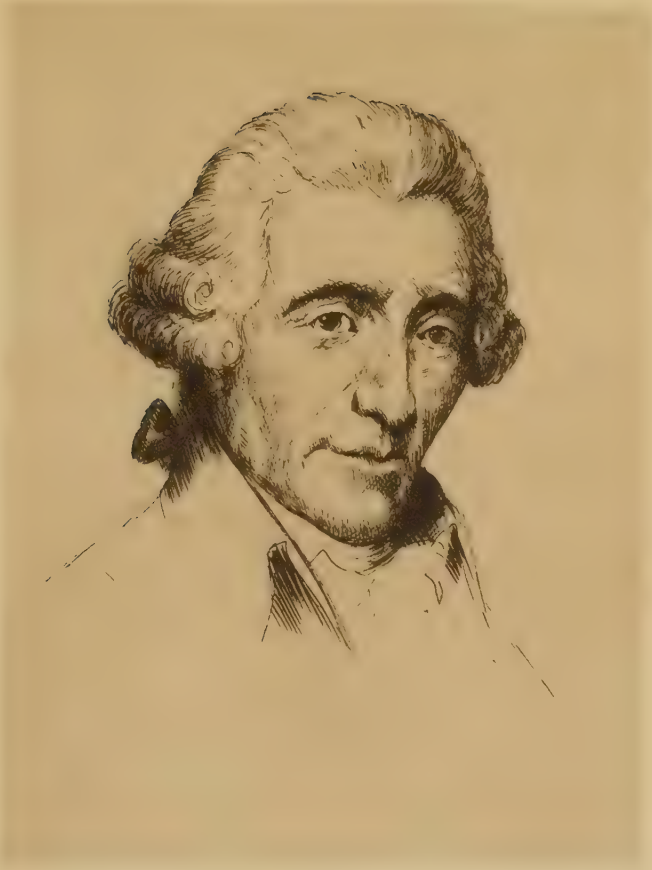
interest at their Sunday-evening concerts, dreamed that one day he might become a musician—perhaps he might even rise to be a Kapellmeister! His own life had been a bitter disappointment to him, for he had been unable to satisfy his longing for a proper knowledge of the art he loved, but he was determined that he would help his small son in every possible way that his poverty would allow him.

When Josef was about six years old a distant relative, Johann Mathias Frankh, came on a visit to the Haydns' cottage. He was a schoolmaster at Hainburg, a little town four leagues away. During the evening concert he noticed Josef's imaginary playing on the violin, and the child's sweet singing showed that he had a good ear and the makings of a musician in him. At last he said: "If you will let me take Sepperl I will see that he is properly taught. I can see now that he promises well."

The parents were quite willing, while Josef himself was simply overjoyed at the knowledge that now he would learn more about the beautiful music which filled his soul. He went away with his new "cousin," as he called Frankh, without any hesitation, happy in the expectation that his childish dreams were to be realized.

And now a new world opened to the youthful singer—but it was by no means always a beautiful one, for Frankh was a very strict teacher and his wife treated him with the utmost neglect, never looking after his clothing or his well-being in any way. He had plenty of hard work before him, for he was taught not only to sing well, but also to play on various instruments, and in addition he had the school lessons of the ordinary less gifted child.

After a time his neglected appearance became a source of misery to the refined and sensitive boy. He tried to realize, however, that present conditions could not last for ever, and he bravely endeavoured to make the best of



Haydn



## HAYDN

---

them. The training of his voice was soon well advanced, and he found comfort and consolation in listening to the organ and the singing in church whenever he was not engaged in school-work. After a time he was admitted to the church choir, where he took a great delight in the anthems.

Always before the mind of the little singer was the great city of Vienna, where he knew one could hear the most beautiful music—the music of his dreams. But Vienna was far away, and the little boy would look down at his ragged clothing and wonder if ever he would have the means to visit that magical city.

One morning Frankh told him that there was to be a procession through the town in honour of a prominent citizen who had just died. A drummer was needed, and he had proposed that Josef should fill that *rôle*. He showed him how to beat time for a march, and Josef quickly understood, so that when the procession took place he felt quite proud of his exhibition of skill. The very drum he used that day is still preserved in the little church of Hainburg.

At the end of the second year of school life in this town a great event occurred for little Josef. Reutter, the Kapellmeister of St Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna, came on a visit to his friend, the pastor of Hainburg, and he happened to mention that he required a few good voices for his choir. "I can find you one at least," said the pastor; "he is a scholar of Frankh, the schoolmaster, and has a sweet voice."

Josef was at once sent for, and the schoolmaster soon returned leading him by the hand.

"Well, my little fellow," said the Kapellmeister, drawing him to his knee, "can you make a shake?"

"No, sir," replied the youngster, "but neither can my cousin Frankh."

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

Reutter laughed heartily at the outspoken boy, and then proceeded to show him how the shake was done. Josef made several attempts, and was very soon able to do it to the entire satisfaction of the teacher. Reutter then tested him on a portion of the Mass, and was so well pleased with his knowledge that he said he was perfectly willing to take him to the Kantorei or choir-school of St Stephen's in Vienna. The boy's heart gave a great leap. Vienna, the city of his dreams! Could it be true that he was really going there? He could scarcely believe in his good fortune. Perhaps had he known all that was to befall him there he might not have been so eager to go. But he was then only a little eight-year-old boy, and childhood's dreams are ever rosy.

Once arrived at the Kantorei Josef plunged into his studies with great fervour, and made rapid progress. He now became possessed with a desire to compose, but he had not the slightest idea how to set about it. However, he hoarded up every scrap of music-paper he could find and covered it with his notes. The Kapellmeister gave him no encouragement. One day, seeing him busy with pencil and paper, he asked what he was doing, and Josef replied that he was composing a *Salve Regina* for twelve voices. Upon this the Kapellmeister remarked that it would be better to write it for two voices before attempting it for twelve, and then added more kindly: "And if you must try your hand at composition, write variations on the motets and vespers which are played in church."

Josef was thrown upon his own resources in his attempt to learn the principles of composition, since neither Reutter nor any of the other teachers would give him any help. With much self-denial he scraped together enough money to buy two books which he had seen at the second-hand bookseller's and which he had longed to possess. One of these was Fux's *Gradus ad Parnassum*, a treatise



## HAYDN

on composition and counterpoint; the other was Matheson's *Complete Conductor*. Happy in the possession of these books, Josef used every moment outside his school-work and choir-practice to study their pages. He was as fond of games and fun as any ordinary boy, but his love of music always came first, and in his anxiety to perfect himself in this art he would often voluntarily work sixteen or eighteen hours out of the twenty-four.

Engaged in the work he loved, amid happy surroundings, a number of years thus passed away. Josef was now a promising lad of fifteen years, and he was greatly looking forward to his younger brother Michael's joining the Kantorei. He began to plan busily how he would help the small boy over his first difficulties and how he would show him the pleasant things that would befall him in his new life—he could not foresee, of course, the sorrows and privations that were in store for himself. From the moment that Michael's pure young voice filled the vast spaces of the cathedral it was plain that Josef's singing could not compete with it. His soprano voice showed signs of breaking, and gradually the principal solo parts which had always hitherto been given to him were allotted to the new chorister. One memorable day, when more elaborate music than usual was being sung, his little brother sang the *Salve Regina*, which had always been Josef's solo, so beautifully that the Emperor and Empress were delighted and presented the singer with twenty ducats.

Poor Josef! He realized that his place was now virtually filled by the young brother whom he had welcomed so joyously only a little while ago. No one was to blame, of course; it was one of those happenings that could not be avoided. But Michael's singing alone was not the cause of Josef's downfall and dismissal from St Stephen's—it was a boyish prank he played on one of the choir-boys

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

who sat in front of him. This boy had a pigtail, and in a mischievous moment Josef snipped it off with a new pair of shears that lay conveniently near. For this jest he was first punished and then expelled from the school.

In his first dazed and angry condition Josef could hardly believe in his ill-fortune. He was no longer to enjoy the busy life he had led, no more to see Michael and his friends, no longer have a comfortable home and sing in his beloved cathedral! How he lived after his dismissal he hardly knew, but several miserable days went by before Providence came to his aid. One rainy night a young man whom he had known for some time met the boy near the cathedral and was struck by his white, pinched face. He asked where he was now living, and Josef replied: "Nowhere—I am starving." At this honest Franz Spangler was immediately touched. "We can't stand here in the rain," he said. "You know I haven't a palace to offer, but you are welcome to share my poor place for one night anyway. Then we shall see what is to be done."

It was but a garret where Spangler lived, but the cheerful fire and warm bread and milk he offered the starving lad seemed luxuries indeed. Best of all was it to curl up on the floor beside the dying embers and fall into a refreshing slumber.

The next morning the world looked brighter to Josef. He made up his mind that he would not try to see Michael, but that he would support himself by his music. How he was to do this he did not know, but he was determined to fight for his livelihood and never to yield. Spangler, who felt deeply sorry for the boy, offered to allow him to occupy a corner of his garret until he could find work, and Josef gratefully accepted. He hoped that he would soon find some lucrative work, but many weary months were spent in a fruitless search for employment and in

seeking to obtain some pupils. Thinly clad as he was and with the vigorous appetite of his seventeen years hardly ever appeased, he struggled bravely on, hopeful that spring would bring him success.

The season of hope arrived, but it brought no employment with it. The sole earnings of the former choir-boy during the long, cold winter had been the coppers thrown to him as he stood singing in the snow-covered streets. But throughout his misfortunes the boy's simple faith in God never failed him, and he felt assured that in some way or another his needs would be met.

At last the tide turned slightly. A few pupils, attracted by the low fees he charged, took lessons from him on the clavier; he obtained a few engagements to play the violin at balls and parties; and some budding composers asked him to revise their manuscripts for a small sum. All these cheering signs of better days to come inspired Josef with hope and gratitude. One day a particularly good piece of fortune came his way: a music-loving friend of means, at whose house he had sometimes played, sent him a hundred and fifty florins, to be repaid whenever convenient and without any interest.

To Haydn this sum seemed a real fortune. It enabled him to leave his friend Spangler and to rent a garret of his own. The new lodging contained no stove, and winter was again almost upon him; it was usually in semi-darkness, even at midday—but the youth was happy. For he had furnished his garret with a little worm-eaten spinet of his own, and he was the happy possessor of the first six sonatas of Emanuel Bach.

On the third floor of the house in which Haydn now lived were the rooms of a celebrated Italian poet, Metastasio. The fellow-lodgers struck up an acquaintance, which resulted in the musician's introduction to the poet's favourite pupil, Marianne Martinez, and also to

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

Niccolo Porpora, an eminent teacher of singing and composition.

About this time a new avenue to fortune opened up to Haydn. It was then a fashion in Vienna to pick up a few florins by serenading persons of importance. Felix Kurz, a manager of one of the principal theatres in Vienna, had recently married a beautiful woman, and it occurred to Haydn that he and a couple of companions might serenade the lady, playing some of his own music. Soon after they had begun to play the door of the house was opened, and Kurz himself stood there in his dressing-gown and slippers. "Whose music was that you were playing?" he asked. "My own," replied Haydn. "Indeed," said Kurz; "then just step inside." The three young men entered the house, and after they had been duly presented to Madame they were given refreshments, and hospitably entertained. "Come and see me to-morrow," said Kurz, as they were bidding him farewell; "I think I have some work for you."

Haydn called next day, and Kurz then informed him that he was looking for some one to compose the music for a comic opera, *The Devil on Two Sticks*, the libretto of which he had written. He asked Haydn how he would represent in music a tempest at sea, as this occurred in the opera, and Haydn was at a loss for an answer as he had never been near the sea in his life. The manager said that he himself had never seen the ocean, and, tossing his arms about wildly, he declared that in his imagination it was like that. Haydn tried in every way he could think of to represent the sea-storm, but Kurz was not satisfied. At last in despair he flung his hands down with a crash on each end of the keyboard and brought them together in the middle. "That's it, that's it!" cried the manager, and embraced the youth excitedly.

All went well with the rest of *The Devil on Two Sticks*.



## HAYDN

---

At last it was finished and produced. But it made very little stir, and the composer was not displeased at this, as he was by no means proud of his first attempt.

Haydn's acquaintance with Porpora promised to have better results. The singing-master had noticed his skill in playing the harpsichord and offered to engage him as accompanist. Haydn gladly accepted without any hesitation, hoping that he would be able to acquire much musical knowledge with this master. Old Porpora was at first very harsh and domineering, treating him more like a valet than a musician, but at last he was won over by Haydn's gentleness and patience, and willingly answered all his questions and corrected his compositions. Best of all, he brought Haydn to the attention of the nobleman in whose house he was teaching, with the result that when the patron went with his family to the baths of Mannersdorf for several months Haydn went with Porpora as his accompanist.

At Mannersdorf Haydn met several distinguished musicians. They showed him great courtesy and kindness, taking much interest in his compositions that were performed during this visit. The nobleman was much impressed by the young man's ambitions and talents, and allotted him a pension of a sum equal to about three pounds a month. Haydn's first act on receiving this money was to buy himself a neat suit of black clothes.

On his return to Vienna his good fortune still persisted. More pupils came to him, and he was soon able to move into better lodgings and to raise the fees for his lessons. The Countess of Thun, who was a wealthy patron of music, asked the young musician to visit her, as she had heard one of his sonatas played on the clavier and thought it charming. Her manner was so sympathetic that Haydn was led to tell her the story of his early struggles. Tears came into her eyes as she listened, and she promised to

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

give him her support as friend and pupil. Haydn left the home of the Countess with a happy and grateful heart.

Haydn's compositions were now heard in the leading musical circles in Vienna, and the future was bright with promise. A wealthy patron of music persuaded him to write a string quartet, and this he followed up with many other quartets. By the influence of the same man he received in 1759 an appointment as director of music to Count Morzin, a rich Bohemian who had a small orchestra at his country seat. In the same year Haydn composed his first symphony.

As his financial position became more sound Haydn bought all the works on theory of music he could obtain and studied them deeply. He had mastered the difficulties of the *Gradus* which he had bought when a boy, and by its means he had worked out his musical independence uninfluenced by any other musician. He was now twenty-six, and his fame was rapidly growing.

In the meantime an affair of the heart greatly influenced the composer's life. He had been engaged by a wigmaker named Keller to give lessons on the harpsichord to his two daughters, and an attachment soon sprang up between the composer and his younger pupil. But he felt that his poverty debarred him from making known his feelings toward her. As prosperity began to dawn, however, Haydn grew courageous and asked the girl to become his wife. Keen indeed was his disappointment to learn that she had now decided to enter a convent. The wigmaker was also disappointed, but his match-making instincts led him to urge the musician into marrying the sister, who was three years older than the girl he loved. The gentle Haydn was unable to withstand the pressure brought upon him and consented. But no sooner was he married to Maria Anna Keller than he found that his bride



## HAYDN

---

was a shrewish creature who cared nothing for art or her husband's ideals, and whose only ambition was to have enough money to squander.

For a while the composer was in sad straits, but fortunately a way of escape soon opened before him. His patron, Count Morzin, was obliged to reduce his establishment, and he at once dismissed his orchestra and its conductor. As soon as this was known Paul Anton Esterházy, the reigning Prince of Hungary, offered Haydn the post of assistant Kapellmeister at his country seat of Eisenstadt. The Prince intended to retain his old Kapellmeister, Werner, because of his long service, but it was understood that Haydn was to have full control of the orchestra and also of most of the musical arrangements.

Haydn was blissfully happy in the realization of his highest hopes. In his wildest dreams he had never imagined that such magnificence could exist as was to be found at the palace of Eisenstadt. The great buildings, the numerous servants, the wonderful parks and gardens, with their fountains, lakes, and flowers, almost made him believe in fairyland. He knew that there was hard work ahead of him, but he felt that in such enchanting surroundings it would not be too difficult—and, best of all, he was freed from the wife whom he had never wished to marry!

When Haydn had spent a year in Prince Paul's service his patron died and was succeeded by his brother Nikolaus. The new prince increased Haydn's salary, and when the old Kapellmeister died in 1766 he promoted the composer to his position. This had been the dream of Josef's father for his son, and it had now been abundantly realized. The mother was now dead, but his father was still living, and on one occasion came to Eisenstadt to visit him. His brother Michael, who was at this time Konzertmeister in Salzburg, spent several happy days with him also at the princely palace.

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

Prince Nikolaus had his summer residence at Esterházy, where the palace was even more magnificent than Eisenstadt, and the music was more elaborate. The Prince enjoyed his life there so greatly that he would postpone his return to town until late in the autumn—and Haydn determined to give him a hint in music. To this end he composed the *Farewell Symphony*, in which, toward the close, each pair of players rose up, extinguished their candles, and passed out, until only the first violinist remained. Finally he blew out his light and went, while Haydn prepared to follow. The Prince at last understood and, treating the whole affair as a joke, gave orders for the departure of the household.

In 1790 Haydn lost the master to whom he was so devotedly attached. He had been left a pension of a thousand florins on condition that he would retain his post, but Prince Anton, who succeeded his brother, cared nothing for music, and Haydn returned to Vienna. Several attempts had been made to induce him to visit London and he had always refused, but now there seemed to be no obstacle in his way. One day a visitor called to see him. "My name is Salomon," he stated, "and I have come from London to take you there. We will settle terms to-morrow." As they crossed from Calais to Dover the composer saw the sea for the first time, and it recalled to him his boyish efforts to describe its music.

London welcomed Haydn warmly, for his fame had already preceded him, and his music was familiar to the public. He gave his first concert at the Hanover Square Rooms on March 11, 1790, and it proved a great success. This was followed by a series of concerts, and at last a benefit was arranged for the composer on May 16; at this he received a wonderful ovation, and realized three hundred and fifty pounds. In London he heard the *Messiah* for the first time, and when at the "Hallelujah

## HAYDN

---

Chorus " the audience rose to their feet Haydn burst into tears, exclaiming, " He is the master of us all ! "

In July he received the honorary degree of Doctor of Music at Oxford, and here were given three great concerts in his honour, special performers being brought from London to take part in it.

In 1794 Haydn was tempted to repeat his visit to England, and he now received even higher honours. His symphonies were heard on all London programmes, and he was made the lion of the season. He was frequently invited to Buckingham Palace to play before the King and Queen, who had always urged him to live in England and who delighted in his music.

Haydn was now sixty-five, and though he had written many compositions his greatest work, the *Creation*, was not yet begun. While he was in London Salomon showed him a poem founded on *Paradise Lost*, written years before in the hope that Handel would use it for an oratorio, and Haydn decided that he would make the attempt. As the oratorio progressed it became for him a labour of love and prayer. At last it was accomplished, and when it was performed in Vienna, on March 19, 1799, it made a profound impression on its audience.

Haydn at once set to work on a second oratorio founded on Thomson's *Seasons*. His desire to work was as great as ever, but his health had begun to fail. " The *Seasons* gave me my finishing stroke," he often remarked to his friends.

Haydn was acknowledged on every hand as the father of instrumental music. He laid great stress on melody, saying : " It is the air which is the charm of music, and it is the air which is the most difficult to produce. The invention of a fine melody is a work of genius." While engaged in the art of composition Haydn liked to feel at his ease with the world ; according to *The Workshop of*

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

*the Mind*, "Handel found the graveyard of some village church his most congenial place for composition, but Haydn had to be in his best clothes, with his hair carefully dressed and a certain diamond ring which Frederick II had given him placed on his forefinger, before he could summon a single note."

Full of years and honours, respected and beloved by all, Haydn died on May 31, 1809. At that time Vienna was in the hands of the French, and the composer was given a very simple burial. But in 1820 the reigning Prince Esterházy had the remains reinterred in the upper parish church at Eisenstadt, and a simple stone with a Latin inscription is placed in the wall above the vault to mark the spot.

## VI

### WOLFGANG AMADEUS CHRYSOSTOM MOZART

(1756-91)

ONE December day in 1759 dusk was closing in over the quaint old city of Salzburg. On the heights above the town the battlements of the great castle caught a reflection of the last gleams of light in the sky, but the narrow streets below were veiled in shadows.

On one of the substantial-looking houses on a principal thoroughfare, called the Getreidegasse, lights were gleaming from the windows on the third floor. Within all had been arranged as for some special occasion, and the large room with three windows looking upon the street was immaculate in its neatness. The brass candlesticks shone like gold, the mahogany table and the rest of the simple furniture had been polished to perfection. For to-day was Father Mozart's birthday, and the little household was about to celebrate it with much ceremony.

Mother Mozart had been busy all day putting her house in order, with the help of her seven-year-old daughter, Nannerl. Little Wolfgang, who was only three, had been eager to be busy with the others, but he had more than once proved a serious hindrance to the work and had been gently reprimanded. It was impossible to be really angry with the little elf, even when he turned somersaults in his clean clothes and chalked his amateur pictures on the newly polished chairs. He never meant to be naughty,



## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

and he was always so tender-hearted and lovable that it was very hard indeed to scold him.

And this was the father's birthday, perhaps the most important of all the family celebrations. Already the roast on the spit was nearing perfection, while in the oven a fine cake was browning.

When the preparations were complete and Leopold Mozart had received the good wishes of the little household, baby Wolfgang was mounted on a footstool to recite a poem in honour of the occasion. When he had finished the recitation he stood still for a moment, then impulsively reached out his tiny arms to his father. Leopold lifted his little son on to his knee, when, clasping his father tightly round the neck, Wolfgang whispered: "Dear Papa, I love you very, very much. After God, next comes my papa."

Leopold Mozart was a musician, and held the post of Vice-Kapellmeister to the Archbishop of Salzburg. On this birthday night two of the Court musicians came in to join in the festivities and to drink a toast to *Musica*, the goddess of the art they loved and honoured.

"I wonder," remarked Leopold, looking down tenderly on his little ones, "if even a little of my own musical knowledge and love for the art will be inherited by my two dear children."

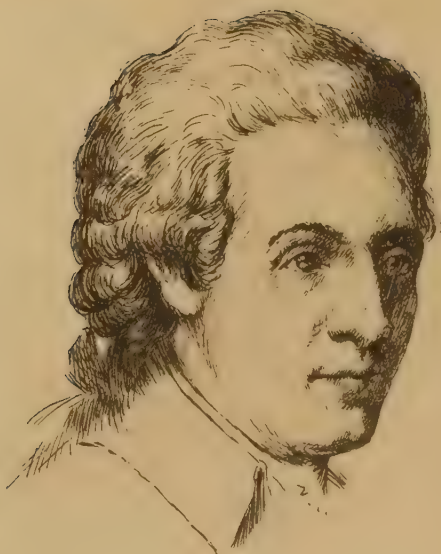
"Why not?" asked the mother. "You long ago promised to begin to give lessons to Nannerl. Can she not have her first lesson to-night?"

"Yes, indeed, *Papachen*," broke in Nannerl; "may I not learn to play the harpsichord? I promise to work very hard."

"Very well," replied her father; "you shall see that I am grateful for all the love you have shown me to-night, and we can begin at once."

"I want to learn music too," exclaimed little Wolfgang, his eyes sparkling with hope as he looked at his father.





Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart *fi*



## MOZART

---

Every one laughed at this, and the Vice-Kapellmeister told the child that he would have to grow a few inches before he could even reach the keys.

Leopold began to give Nannerl her first lesson, and the little girl showed both quickness and patience in grasping the ideas. At first nobody noticed the tiny child who had planted himself at his sister's elbow, the light of the candles falling on his delicate, sensitive features and bright brown hair. His eyes never left Nannerl's fingers as she felt hesitatingly among the black and white keys, and his quick ear readily understood the intervals she tried to play.

As soon as the little girl had left the harpsichord Wolfgang slipped into her place and began to repeat with his tiny fingers the lessons his father had taught her. He sought out the different intervals, and when at last he found them his little face shone with joy. In a very short time he was able to play all the simple exercises that had been given to his sister.

The parents listened to their wonder-child with ever-increasing astonishment, and tears of pleasure came into their eyes. It was obvious to them that Wolfgang must have lessons as well as Nannerl—and what joy it would be to teach them both!

It was a happy household that retired that night. Nannerl was overjoyed because at last she was to be taught how to play the harpsichord; Wolfgang, or "Starbeam" as he was called, dreamed of the beautiful music he might some day be able to make; the parents were filled with joy that Heaven had granted them such blessings in their children.

The music lessons now began in real earnest, and both children made remarkable progress. Marianne—for that was Nannerl's real name—soon began to play very well indeed, while little Wolfgang seemed hardly to have to be taught at all, as music came to him by instinct. The

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

father would sometimes compose a minuet for the little girl to study, and in half an hour her baby brother would have mastered it. Soon Wolfgang was able to write his own minuets. Several that he wrote when he was five years old have been handed down to us, and they are perfect in both style and form.

One day Leopold Mozart brought home with him to dinner Schachtner, the Court trumpeter. As they came into the living-room they surprised little Wolfgang writing at his father's desk.

"Whatever are you doing, Wolferl?" cried his father, looking first at the ink-stained fingers of his son and then at the paper covered with blots.

"Oh, Papa, I'm writing a sonata for the harpsichord," he replied eagerly, "but it isn't finished yet."

"Never mind that," said Leopold Mozart. "But we must see it, for it must surely be very fine."

Taking up the paper the two men examined it curiously. The sheet was so much smeared with ink-stains that the notes were hardly recognizable, for the child had thrust his pen to the bottom of the inkwell every time it had run dry, and naturally frequent blots were the result. These had not troubled him in the least, for as soon as he had seen an offending blot he had rubbed his hand over it and proceeded with his composition.

At first the two Court musicians laughed heartily at the efforts of the little composer, but after a time the father cried: "Look, my dear Schachtner; see how correct and orderly it is, all written according to rule. Only one could never play it, for it seems to be too difficult!"

"But it's a sonata, Papa," explained Wolfgang, "and one must practise it first, of course. This is the way it should go."

He sprang to the piano and began to play. His small

## MOZART

---

fingers could not master the more intricate parts, but they gave a sufficient idea of how he intended the piece to sound.

The two men stood in speechless astonishment at this proof of the child's powers. Then Leopold Mozart caught his son in his arms, kissed him, and cried: "My Wolfgang, you will become a great musician."

Wolfgang, not content to have lessons on the harpsichord only, begged to be allowed to study the violin also. Hardly had he begun these studies when one evening he asked if he might play second violin in a set of six trios which his father, Schachtner, and Wentzl, the composer of the trios, were about to play. Needless to say, his request was refused, but he was told that he might sit next to Schachtner and pretend to play, so long as he made no sound.

The music began, and before long the musicians noticed that the boy was actually playing the second-violin part and doing it correctly. The second violin ceased bowing in amazement and allowed Wolfgang to take his place. After this he was permitted to play all the second-violin parts of the six pieces. Emboldened by his success, he now volunteered to try the first-violin part. His offer was greeted with laughter, but he was undaunted, and, taking up his violin again, he played the trios through to the end. There were mistakes here and there, of course, but the performance was undoubtedly wonderful for a young novice.

Three years after he had begun his musical studies little Wolfgang Mozart had made such marvellous progress that the fame of his powers had passed beyond the narrow limits of his native town. Leopold Mozart had no means other than the salary he received at Court, and he decided to turn his children's exceptional gifts to advantage in order to provide them with a better

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

education in music and also to help to supply their needs at home. Wolfgang was now six years old and Marianne eleven, and the father determined to travel with them to distant towns and show off their prowess on the concert platform. The first experiment he made, in January 1762, proved so successful that in the following September he set out with them for Vienna.

They stayed at Linz to give a concert, and every one was delighted with their playing. From here they continued their journey to the monastery of Ips, where they expected to stay for the night, and after a wonderful day spent in sailing down the majestic Danube they reached the grey old building with its battlemented walls. Soon after their arrival Leopold Mozart took his son into the chapel to see the organ.

The child looked with awe at the great pipes, the keyboard, and the pedals. He begged his father to explain their working, and afterward, when the father filled the great bellows, the boy pushed aside the organ bench, stood upon the pedals, and worked them up and down as though he had always known how to play. The monks hastened to their chapel, and when one pointed to the figure of a tiny child in the organ-loft they held their breath in amazement—was it possible, they asked each other, that a child was capable of producing such beautiful music? They stood listening to his playing until at last Wolfgang chanced to see them, when he crept meekly down from his perch.

As they continued their journey to Vienna Wolfgang was the life of the party, eager to know the names and history of everything they saw. At the custom-house on the frontier he made friends with the officials by playing for them on the violin, and thus he secured an easy pass for the party.

When they arrived in Vienna Leopold found that the



## MOZART

---

fame of his children had preceded them, and a kind and gracious welcome awaited them when they went to the palace of Schönbrunn. The Emperor Franz Josef immediately took a liking to the boy, was enchanted with his playing, and called him his "little magician." In jest he made him read difficult pieces at sight, play with one finger on the harpsichord, and finally he tested him by covering the keyboard with a cloth—but little Wolfgang played as finely as before, and the whole company applauded heartily. The boy was so pleased with the kindness of the Emperor and Empress that he showed it in his childish way by climbing into the lap of the Empress and giving her a hug and a kiss, just as though she had been his own mother. He was also greatly attracted by the little Princess Marie Antoinette, a beautiful child of about his own age, with long fair curls and laughing blue eyes. The two children immediately became friends.

After all this Court favour had been showered upon them the gifted children became the idols of society in Vienna. Invitations and gifts poured in upon them from every side. Each of them received a diamond ring from the Emperor, while Nannerl was given a pretty white silk dress and Wolfgang a violet-coloured suit. A portrait of the boy in his gala suit, painted at this time, is still preserved.

In the following year the Mozarts took their children on a longer journey, this time with Paris in view. On the way they stopped at many towns and cities. The first performance they gave at Frankfort was so successful that three more were given. A newspaper of that time states that "little Mozart is able to name all notes played at a distance whether single or in chords, whether played on the harpsichord, or any other instrument, bell, glass, or clock." The father offered as an additional attraction that the child would play with the keyboard covered.

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

The family remained in Paris for five months, exciting surprise and enthusiasm whenever they appeared, and the children had the honour of playing before the Court at Versailles. From Paris they travelled to London, in April 1764.

On reaching England Leopold's first care was to obtain an introduction to Court. King George III and his Queen were both lovers of music, and before very long an invitation came for the children to attend at the palace. The King showed the greatest interest in Wolfgang, asking him to play at sight difficult pieces by Bach and Handel. Then the boy, after accompanying the Queen in a song, selected the bass part in a piece by Handel and improvised a charming melody to it. The King was so greatly impressed that he asked him to play the organ, and in this Wolfgang won a further triumph.

June 4 was to witness the celebration of the King's birthday, and London was now beginning to fill with people from all parts of the country for this event. The date arranged for the first public concert of the Mozarts was June 5, and when it took place the hall was filled to overcrowding, and one hundred guineas were taken. Many of the performers who assisted refused to take their fees, and this kindly act on behalf of his children was greatly appreciated by Leopold.

Not long after this the father fell ill, and the little family moved to Chelsea for its quiet situation and the benefit of its pure air. Later on they were granted another reception at Court, where, after Wolfgang's wonderful performance, the children won much applause by playing some duets on the harpsichord composed by the boy—a style of composition then quite new.

In July 1765 the Mozarts left London and travelled in Holland. Afterward they paid a second visit to Paris, where they added to their former triumphs; they also

## MOZART

---

played in many other large towns. Finally they brought their long tour to a close when they returned to Salzburg in November 1766.

During the next two years Leopold Mozart made a couple of journeys to Vienna with his children, but these do not require a detailed account. He now decided that Wolfgang must go to Italy, for at that time no musician's education was considered to be complete until he had studied in that land of music. Accordingly, in December 1769, father and son set out for the sunny South, their hearts beating high with hope.

Throughout the journey the happy-hearted boy was jubilant. He watched the peasants eagerly as they danced on the vine-clad terraces overlooking the deep blue lakes, or listened as they sang at their work in the fields. He watched with admiration the wonderful processions of priests through the narrow streets of the towns—but most of all he was attracted by the magnificent music to be heard in the cathedrals.

Arrived in Italy, the young musician had plenty of work before him, especially for a boy of thirteen. For, besides the concerts he had to give, he was set difficult problems by the various professors who wished to test his powers. Then, too, the fame of his playing was constantly increasing, and the farther he travelled into Italy the more demands there were to hear this prodigy.

At Roveredo, where it was announced that he would play the organ in St Thomas's Church, the crowd was so great that he could scarcely reach the organ-loft. The vast audience listened spell-bound, and then refused to disperse until they had caught a glimpse of the young organist. At Verona he met with fresh triumphs: one of his symphonies was performed, and a celebrated artist painted his portrait. At Milan the chief musician of the

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

city subjected the boy to severe tests, all of which he was able to accomplish to the delight and astonishment of his audience.

But it was at Bologna that he met with the most flattering reception. Here was the home of the famous Padre Martini, the aged composer of church music, a most lovable man who was almost worshipped by the Italians. Father Martini had long since ceased to attend concerts, and every one was astonished at his presence in the brilliant audience gathered at Count Pallavicini's mansion to listen to the boy's playing. Wolfgang realized the importance of the occasion and gave his best performance. Father Martini at once took the boy to his heart, invited him to visit him as often as possible during his stay, and asked him to work out several fugue subjects. These the boy accomplished with ease, and the Padre declared that he was perfectly satisfied with his knowledge of composition.

The Mozarts now continued on their journey to Rome, amid a succession of triumphs. At Florence Wolfgang played before the Court of the Archduke Leopold, and he won great applause by the ease with which he solved every problem put to him by the Court music director.

It was Holy Week when young Mozart and his father entered Rome, and the spell of the great festival was upon the city. They quickly mingled with the throngs that fill the vast temple of St Peter's at this solemn season, and after attending a service and viewing the treasures of the cathedral they entered the Sistine Chapel. Here, where is to be seen the wonderful painting of the *Last Judgment* by Michelangelo, the celebrated *Miserere* by Allegri was to be performed. Wolfgang had been looking forward to this moment all through the latter part of his journey. His father had told him how jealously this music was guarded, that it could never be performed in any other



## MOZART

---

place, and that the singers were never allowed to take their parts out of the chapel. He was naturally intensely eager to hear this great work.

And indeed it would be difficult to imagine anything more beautiful and impressive than the singing of the *Miserere*. Immediately preceding it is the solemn service called *Tenebræ* (Darkness), during which the six tall candles on the altar are extinguished one by one until but one is left, and this is removed to a space behind the altar. Then in almost complete darkness the *Miserere* is heard. A single voice first sings the short introduction—then comes silence, a silence so profound that the listener scarce dares to breathe for fear of disturbing it. At length the first sad notes of the supplication are heard, like the softest wailing of an anguished spirit; gradually they gain force until the whole building seems to throb with the thrilling intensity of the music.

The young musician and his father were both profoundly moved. Neither of them spoke as they left the chapel and sought their lodgings. After they had gone to bed the boy found that he could not sleep, his thoughts were too full of the wonderful music he had heard. He arose, lit his lamp, and brought out pens and music-paper. He worked industriously throughout the night, and when morning dawned his father found him asleep, his beautiful head upon his folded arms, while before him on the table lay the score of the *Miserere* by Allegri, written entirely from memory.

The following day was Good Friday, when the *Miserere* was performed for the second time. Wolfgang, the boy of fourteen who had performed the wonderful feat of writing out this work after one hearing, again attended the service, keeping the score in his hat, and he found his work required but a couple of trifling corrections to make it perfect.

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

The news of this startling piece of work gained for the young musician a cordial welcome into the houses of the great in Rome. During their stay father and son were fêted to their hearts' content.

At Naples, their next stopping-place, Wolfgang played before a brilliant company, and excited so much astonishment that people declared that his power in playing came from a ring he wore on his finger—"He wears a charm," they cried. Mozart smiled, removed the ring, and played more brilliantly than ever. Then the enthusiasm was redoubled. The Neapolitans showed them every attention and honour, even providing them with a carriage for their use. An account is given of their driving through the principal streets, the father wearing a maroon-coloured coat with light blue facings, and Wolfgang in one of apple-green with rose-coloured facings and silver buttons.

It was indeed a wonderful tour that the Mozarts made in Italy, and on their return to Rome the Pope gave to Wolfgang the order of the Golden Spur, making him Chevalier de Mozart. At Bologna he was made a member of the Accademia Filharmonica. The test for admission into this was setting an antiphon in four parts, and Wolfgang was locked into a room until he should complete his task. To the astonishment of all, he asked to be set free at the end of half an hour, having completed his task!

The travellers now proceeded to Milan, where the boy had been commissioned to compose an opera. It was a great test for one so young to accomplish, and he wrote to his mother and sister to pray for his success. After three months' hard work he had produced the opera of *Mitridate*, and on December 26, 1770, he conducted its first performance. That was a proud and happy day for the Mozarts, for the opera succeeded beyond their hopes. *Mitridate* was afterward performed twenty times before crowded houses, and its success brought an election to



## MOZART

---

the Accademia, and also a commission to write a dramatic *Serenata* for an approaching royal wedding. This work was also enthusiastically received. The Empress, who had commissioned him to compose the work, was so highly delighted that, in addition to the promised fee, she gave him a gold watch with her portrait set in diamonds on the back.

Sunshine and success had followed the gifted boy through all his travels—but now shadows and disappointments were to come. These were due to jealousy, intrigue, and the indifference of those in power who might have helped him, but who failed to recognize his genius.

Shortly after the return of the Mozarts to their native town their friend and protector, the good Archbishop of Salzburg, died. His successor cared nothing for art and was contemptuous of those who followed it as a profession. He persistently refused to appoint Wolfgang to any office worthy of his talent or to recognize his gifts in any way. The musician remained at home in Salzburg, always hoping that his prospects would improve, and he continued to work at his compositions with untiring diligence. By the time he was twenty-one he had accumulated a mass of music that embraced every branch of the art. He had a growing reputation as a composer, but his future was far from being settled. The post of Konzertmeister which he held yielded him but a trifling salary, and he was often pressed for money. Leopold therefore decided to undertake another professional tour with his son, but the Archbishop refused to allow him to leave Salzburg. The only course left open to the Mozarts was for the mother to travel with Wolfgang, and for this purpose they set out on the morning of September 23, 1777.

As the town of Salzburg faded into the haze of that September morning Wolfgang's spirits rose, for the sense of freedom was so exhilarating; he felt that he had

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

escaped from the place associated in his mind with tyranny and oppression, and he was about to seek his fortune in new and wider fields.

At Munich, where they made their first halt, Wolfgang sought an engagement at the Elector's Court. He was granted an audience at the Nymphenburg, a magnificent palace on the outskirts of the city, but the Elector said he had no vacancy for a musician. Possibly, he added, he might be able to make one later after Mozart had been to Italy and had made a name for himself—and with this he turned away.

Mozart stood as if stunned. To be told to go to Italy, where he had played on concert platforms for seven years, and where honours had been showered upon him! The insult was too great, and he shook off the dust of Munich and made his way to Mannheim.

Here he found himself in a more congenial atmosphere. The Elector maintained a fine orchestra, and Mozart became a great friend of the conductor, Cannabich, giving music lessons to his daughter. But he did not seem able to secure a permanent appointment at Court worthy of his genius and ability. Money became more and more scarce, and Leopold and Nannerl had to make many sacrifices at home in order to support the mother and son abroad. With the best of intentions Wolfgang failed to make his way except as a teacher of the harpsichord, and his father, who had been obliged to turn to the same means of securing extra money, wrote quite sharply to his son to bestir himself in finding some settled work for the future.

Mannheim possessed a special attraction for the young genius of which the father knew nothing. Shortly after he had arrived in this city Wolfgang became acquainted with the Weber family. Fridolin von Weber was the uncle of Karl Weber, the composer; his two eldest

## MOZART

---

daughters, Aloysia, aged fifteen, and Konstanze, aged fourteen, were charming girls with some musical talent. Aloysia had a sweet, pure voice, and was studying for the stage; indeed she had already made her *début* in opera. It was not at all strange that Mozart, who often joined the family circle, should fall in love with the girl's fair beauty and fresh voice, that he should write songs for her, and teach her to sing them as he thought they would prove best. The two young people were often together, and their early attraction fast ripened into love. Wolfgang formed a project for helping the Webers, who were in rather straitened circumstances, by undertaking a journey to Italy in company with Aloysia and her father; he intended to write an opera in which Aloysia should appear as the prima donna. He communicated this brilliant plan to his father, saying that he would stop at Salzburg on the way, when his father and Nannerl could meet the fair young singer, whom he was sure they would love.

Leopold Mozart was distracted at the idea of this project. He wrote to his son at once, advising him to go to Paris and there to try to make a name for himself. Wolfgang yielded dutifully, and with a heavy heart prepared to leave Mannheim, where he had spent so happy a winter. It was thus his love-dream came to an end. The parting with the Weber household was very sad, for they regarded Wolfgang as their greatest benefactor.

The hopes that Leopold Mozart had built on Wolfgang's success in Paris were destined not to be realized. The enthusiastic reception given to the child prodigy was not awarded to the mature musician, and three months passed away in more or less fruitless efforts. Then his mother, who had been his constant companion in his trials and travels, fell seriously ill, and on July 3, 1778, she died in his arms.

Mozart prepared to leave Paris immediately, and his

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

father was willing that he should do this, as the Archbishop of Salzburg offered him the position of Court organist at a salary of five hundred florins, with permission to absent himself whenever he might be called upon to conduct his own operas. Leopold urged Wolfgang to accept, as their joint income would then amount to a thousand florins a year—a sum that would enable them not only to pay their debts, but to live in comparative comfort.

Mozart had not the heart to withstand his father's appeal, although the thought of settling down in Salzburg under the conditions stated in his father's letter was distasteful to him. He set out from Paris at once, promising himself a single indulgence before he should enter into the bondage which lay before him—a visit to his friends the Webers at Mannheim.

When Mozart arrived at Mannheim he found that the Webers had removed to Munich, and thither he followed them. He was received by the family as warmly as of yore, but Aloysia gave him only a cool and friendly greeting. The few short months that had elapsed since their parting had destroyed her fickle attachment, and this discovery was a bitter trial to Wolfgang. He returned to his Salzburg home saddened by disappointed love and ambition.

Leopold and Nannerl cheered him with their rapturous welcome. The greeting and homage showered upon him by sister, father, and friends was little short of a triumph. In their eyes his success was unshadowed by failure: to them he was Mozart the great composer, the genius among musicians. He was deeply touched by their proofs of affection and esteem, but he had still the same aversion to Salzburg and his Court duties. When, therefore, he obtained leave of absence in November 1780, he felt a keen joy in setting out for Munich to complete and

80



## MOZART

---

produce the opera he had been commissioned to write for the carnival of the following year.

The new opera, *Idomeneo*, fulfilled the high expectations his Munich friends had formed of the composer's genius. Its reception at the rehearsals proved that success was certain, and at one of these the Elector himself joined the performers in expressing his unqualified approval. In his own home the progress of the work was followed with keen interest, and when the performance was imminent Leopold and Marianne journeyed to Munich to witness Wolfgang's triumph.

The first performance of *Idomeneo* took place on January 29, 1781, and the enthusiastic applause with which it was received filled the hearts of the Mozarts with joy. To the old father, who watched the delighted audience with tear-filled eyes, this opera seemed to set the seal of greatness on his son's career.

But the Archbishop, under whom Mozart held his slight office, grew more overbearing in his treatment. He was undoubtedly jealous that great people in Vienna were so deferential to one of his servants, as he chose to call the composer. At last the rupture came. A stormy scene took place, during which Mozart was dismissed from his service—and he was free.

Leopold Mozart was alarmed when he heard the news of the break between his son and the Archbishop, and he endeavoured to make Wolfgang reconsider his decision and return to Salzburg. But the son took a firm stand at last for his independence. "Do not ask me to return to Salzburg," he wrote; "ask me anything but that."

Mozart now passed through a phase of poverty and difficulty. His small salary had come to an end, and he had only one pupil on whom to depend for his livelihood. He had numerous friends, however, and soon his fortunes began to mend. In Vienna he went to lodge with his old

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

friends the Webers, for Frau Weber and her two unmarried daughters were living here in reduced circumstances, and his former sweetheart Aloysia was married. He produced an opera, *Il Seraglio*, which brought him fame both in Vienna and Prague, and gained him the patronage of many distinguished persons, including that of the Emperor Josef.

Mozart had now decided to make a home for himself, and he chose as his bride Konstanze Weber. His father remonstrated, but in spite of his opposition the young people were married on August 16, 1782. Konstanze proved herself a devoted wife, but she was utterly inexperienced in housekeeping. The newly married pair were soon involved in many financial difficulties, from which there seemed no escape save by accepting some Court appointment. But the Emperor, despite his sincere interest in the composer, seemed disinclined to give him such a position.

Mozart now began seriously to consider venturing on a journey to London and Paris, but his father's urgent appeal that he would wait and exercise patience delayed him. Meanwhile he carried out his cherished idea of presenting his bride to his father and sister in Salzburg. It was a very happy visit, and later on when Mozart and his wife were again settled in Vienna they were able to entertain Leopold in their own home. On that occasion Leopold found his son immersed in work, and it gladdened his heart to see how greatly appreciated were his playing and composition. One happy evening they spent with Josef Haydn, who, after he had heard some of Mozart's quartets, took the father aside, saying: "I declare before God, as a man of honour, that your son is the greatest composer I know, either personally or by reputation. He has taste, but, more than that, he has the most consummate knowledge of the art of composition." In this connexion it is interesting to record Mozart's remark: "It is a very



## MOZART

---

great error to suppose that my art has been easily acquired. I assure you there is scarcely anyone who has worked so hard at the study of composition as I have."

This visit to Vienna witnessed the last meeting between father and son. Leopold was stricken with illness soon after he returned to Salzburg, and died on May 28, 1787. The news reached his son shortly after he had achieved one of the greatest successes of his life, *The Marriage of Figaro*. The performance of his latest opera was hailed with delight by enthusiastic crowds in Vienna and Prague; its songs were heard at every street-corner and every village ale-house of the countryside. "Never was anything more complete than the triumph of Mozart and his *Nozze di Figaro*," wrote a singer who knew him; "and for Mozart himself I shall never forget his face when lighted up with the glowing rays of genius; it is as impossible to describe as to paint sunbeams."

Despite the success of this opera, however, Mozart was still a poor man and obliged to earn his livelihood by giving music lessons. Finally the Emperor, hoping to keep him in Germany, appointed him chamber composer at a salary of about eighty pounds a year. This must have seemed to Mozart and his friends a beggarly sum in return for the value his Majesty professed to set upon the composer's services to art. "Too much for the little I am asked to produce, too little for what I produce," were the bitter words Mozart penned on the official return stating the amount of his salary.

Mozart's extravagance in dress and household expenditure, his generosity to those who required assistance, added to his wife's frequent ill-health and lack of thrift, served to keep the family in continual financial straits. Occasionally they were even without fire or food, though friends were always found to help them when in such dire distress. Mozart's father had declared that

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

procrastination was his son's besetting sin, yet he was a tireless worker, and never idle. In September 1787 he was at Prague, writing the score of his greatest opera, *Don Giovanni*, which was to be produced on October 29. On the evening of the 28th it was found that he had not yet written the overture, although he kept the complete score in his head. He set to work at this late hour, while his wife read fairy-tales aloud to him to keep him awake and at intervals gave him strong punch to drink. By seven o'clock the next morning the score was ready for the copyist, and in the evening it was played without rehearsal, the ink being scarcely dry on the paper!

Even the triumph of *Don Giovanni*, which was received with thunders of applause, failed to remedy Mozart's desperate financial straits. Shortly after its appearance Prince Karl Lichnowsky, his pupil and patron, proposed that he should accompany him to Berlin, and he gladly accepted, hoping that it would be the means of improving his fortunes. The King of Prussia received him with honour and respect, and offered him the post of Kapellmeister at a salary equal to about six hundred pounds. This sum would have liberated him from all his financial embarrassments, and he was strongly tempted to accept the offer, but he declined it from loyalty to his good Emperor Josef.

The month of July 1791 found Mozart at home in Vienna at work on *The Magic Flute*, an opera he had undertaken to help his friend Salieri, who had taken a little theatre in the suburb of Wieden. One day he received a visit from a tall man who was a stranger to him, and who brought him a secret commission to write a Requiem for him. He refused to give either his own name or that of the person who had sent him.

Mozart was somewhat depressed by this mysterious commission, but he set to work on it at once. But the composition of both the opera and the Requiem were

## MOZART

---

interrupted by a pressing request that he would write an opera in honour of the coronation of Leopold II at Prague. The ceremony had been fixed for September 6, so there was no time to lose, and Mozart at once set out for Prague. As he was about to enter the travelling carriage which awaited him at the door the mysterious stranger suddenly appeared and inquired for the Requiem. The composer, hastily promising to finish it on his return, entered his carriage and drove away.

The opera he had been commissioned to write, *La Clemenza di Tito*, was finished in due course and produced, but it met with an indifferent reception. Mozart returned to Vienna depressed in spirit and physically exhausted with overwork. However, he braced himself anew, and on September 30 he produced *The Magic Flute*, which met with an instantaneous success that increased at every performance.

Mozart now turned his attention to the unfinished Requiem. But the strain and excitement of the past few months had done their work: a succession of fainting fits overcame him, and he seemed to lose command of the marvellous powers which had always been his. He now feared that he would not live to complete the work, and one day he said sadly to Konstanze: "It is for myself that I am writing the Requiem."

On the evening of December 4, 1791, he begged some of his friends who had gathered at his bedside to hand him the score of the Requiem, and, propped up by pillows, he tried to sing one of the passages. But the effort was too great, the manuscript slipped from his nerveless hand, and he fell back speechless with emotion. A few hours later, on the morning of December 5, this great master, of whom it was prophesied that he would cause all others to be forgotten, passed away from the scene of his many struggles and great triumphs.

## VII

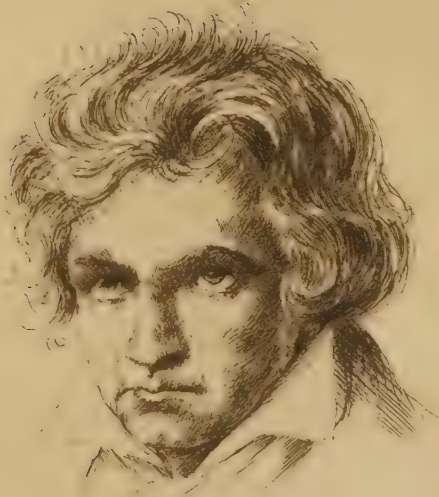
### LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

(1770-1827)

**L**UDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN, "the Shakespeare of music," as he has been called, was born on December 16, 1770, in the little university town of Bonn, on the Rhine. His father, Johann van Beethoven, was a member of the Court orchestra of the Elector of Cologne, and was extremely poor. The tiny room in which Ludwig was born was so small that a good-sized man could hardly stand upright in it, and it was very dark, as it looked out on a walled garden.

Ludwig's father had naturally heard of the fame of young Mozart, who was now fourteen, but who had been playing on concert platforms for eight years and was everywhere acclaimed as a marvellous prodigy. He decided to train his new-born son as a pianist, and thus to gain fame and money for the poverty-stricken family. As soon as Ludwig was old enough, therefore, to practise scales and finger exercises, he was made to do this for hours together. He was a gifted child, but he hated these never-ending tasks of finger technique, and often longed to join his companions who were allowed to run about and play in the sunshine. But every time he stopped practising to rest and dream for a moment his father's stern face would appear at the doorway and a harsh voice would call out: "Ludwig, what are you doing? Go on with your exercises at once. There will be no soup for you until they are finished."

Ludwig was sent to the public school, where he learned



*Louis Van Beethoven*





## BEETHOVEN

---

to read and write, but he did not make friends very quickly with the other children. His early training had made the child seem wholly absorbed in music, and it was only when seated at the piano that he was really happy and free from loneliness.

His father, although hard and severe, really wished his son to have as thorough a knowledge of music as his poor means would permit. When the boy was nine years old Johann, with a mingling of satisfaction and pride, declared that he could teach him no more and that another master must be found. The years of hard toil had produced wonderful results, even with the uninteresting training that he had been given. The family fortunes had by no means improved, for the father became more and more addicted to drink, and when a prospective lodger appeared who was something of a musician he arranged to teach the boy in part payment of his room.

Little Ludwig wondered if his new teacher would turn out to be as severe a taskmaster as his father, but Tobias Pfeiffer was made in a different mould. He soon discovered that his landlord spent many of his evenings at the tavern, and as an act of kindness Tobias would venture there late at night and bring him safely home. After this he would go to the bedside of the sleeping boy, and waken him, telling him it was now time to practise. The two would then go into the living-room, where they would play together for several hours, improvising on original themes and playing duets. For about a year this curious instruction was given, and Ludwig was also given lessons on the organ. Besides this, he studied Latin, French, Italian, and logic.

In the meantime things went from bad to worse in the Beethoven home. At last Frau Beethoven, in the hope of bettering their unhappy condition, undertook a trip through Holland with her son. She believed that if he

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

were to play in the homes of the wealthy Dutch he might make a great deal of money. The tour was successful in that it relieved the pressing necessities of the moment, but the sturdy, independent spirit of the boy showed itself even in these early days. "The Dutch are very stingy," he remarked to a friend, "and I shall take care not to trouble them again."

Ludwig was by this time a pianist of force and finish; he could read well at sight, and knew nearly the whole of Bach's *Well-tempered Clavichord*. He could also play the organ fairly well, as he had studied it with Christian Neefe, the organist of the Court church. This was a really good record for a boy of eleven, and it was said that if he continued as well as he had begun he would become a second Mozart.

In 1791 a great honour was bestowed upon the boy. Christian Neefe was ordered to accompany the Elector and his Court to Münster, and he had thus to leave his organ at Bonn for a time. Before he set out he called Ludwig to him and told him of his intended absence. "I must have an assistant to take my place at the organ here," he said, and then, realizing that the boy was too modest to guess his meaning, continued: "I have thought of an assistant, one I am sure I can trust—and that is you, Ludwig."

The eleven-year-old lad was overwhelmed by this honour. To think that he was now to conduct the service, and receive the respect and deference due to this position! But though he was pleased at this prospect he knew that there was no money attached to the position, and this was what the straitened family most required. But the responsibility of the position and the confidence of Neefe spurred him on to a passion for work which nothing could afterward check. He began to try his hand at composition, and at this time he produced three sonatas for the pianoforte.

Before he had reached his thirteenth birthday Ludwig

## BEETHOVEN

---

obtained his first official appointment from the Elector : he became what was called 'cembalist' in the orchestra, which meant that he had to play the piano, and during rehearsals he was to act as conductor. But again this was an unpaid appointment, and it was not until the next year that he began to receive a small salary, when he was made second organist to the Court, under the new Elector, Max Franz. He now received a sum equal to about thirteen pounds a year.

Ludwig's ambition for higher achievements now made him long to leave the little town of Bonn and venture into the great world. Vienna was the centre of German music in those times, and the boy continually dreamed, as Haydn had done before him, that he too might see this wonderful city. He could hardly believe in his good fortune when a friend who knew of his great desire came forward with an offer to pay the expenses of the journey. Now, at last, he would hear some of the first composers of the day ; and—his chief desire—he would meet the divine Mozart, the greatest of them all !

Ludwig, who was now seventeen, set out for the city of his dreams with the brightest expectations. As soon as he reached Vienna he called at Mozart's house. The great composer received him with kindness and requested him to play, but after a time the boy noticed that he seemed to be preoccupied and was paying very little attention. He therefore stopped playing and asked Mozart if he would give him a theme on which he might improvise. His host gave him a simple theme, and Beethoven, taking the slender thread, worked it up with so much feeling and power that Mozart, who was now all astonishment and attention, stepped into the next room and said to some of his friends who were there : " Pay attention to this young man ; he will make a stir in the world some day."

Shortly after Ludwig returned to Bonn he was saddened

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

by the loss first of his kind, patient mother, and then of his little sister Margaretha—heartfelt sorrow which no doubt inspired some of his most beautiful compositions.

But brighter days were to follow. Ludwig now became acquainted with the von Breuning family, a widow lady with four young children, three boys and a girl, who all became very fond of the young musician. The youngest boy and the girl studied music under him, but their music master was always treated as one of the family, and frequently stayed for days at a time at their house. They were cultured people, and in their society Beethoven's whole nature expanded. He began to take an interest in the literature of his own country and in English authors as well; all his leisure time he devoted to reading and to composition.

About this time also he made a good and useful friend in the young Count Waldstein. One day the Count called on the musician, and found him seated at his old, worn-out piano, surrounded by signs of abject poverty. He was greatly touched to find that the young man whose music he so greatly admired should have to struggle for the bare necessities of life while he himself enjoyed every luxury, and he felt that it was totally unjust. He dared not offer money to the composer for fear of offending his self-respect, but he shortly afterward made him happy by the gift of a fine new piano in place of the old one. Beethoven was very grateful to his friend, and later he dedicated to the Count one of his finest sonatas—known as the *Waldstein Sonata* (*Op. 53*).

In 1788 the Elector founded a national theatre, with a view to furthering the opera, and Beethoven was appointed viola player in the orchestra, still retaining his post as assistant organist in the chapel. In July 1792 it was rumoured that Haydn, who had just met with wonderful success in London, was to pass through Bonn on his way

90



## BEETHOVEN

---

to his home in Vienna. The orchestra arranged to give him a reception, and when the master arrived Beethoven seized the opportunity to show him a cantata he had composed. Haydn praised the work and greatly encouraged the young musician to proceed with his studies. When the Elector heard of this he felt that it was only due to the young man that he should have an opportunity to develop his talents in order to produce greater works, and he decided to send him at his own expense to study strict counterpoint with Haydn. Beethoven was now twenty-two, and the compositions he had already published had brought him considerable fame and appreciation among his acquaintances—but at last he was to have a wider scope for his gifts.

In November 1792 Beethoven bade farewell to Bonn, and for the second time set out for the city of his dreams, Vienna. He was destined never to see Bonn again. When he arrived in Vienna he was comparatively unknown, but all who heard him were immediately impressed by his fine piano-playing and wonderful gift for improvising. He was constantly engaged to play in the homes of the wealthy aristocracy, and many who heard him play asked to become his pupils. He was thus well on the way to social success, but unfortunately his brusque manners often made enemies of his would-be patrons. He made no efforts to conciliate or please; he was obstinate and self-willed. In spite of this however, the innate nobility and sincerity of his character retained for him the regard of men and women belonging to the highest ranks of society. With the Prince and Princess Lichnowsky he shortly became very intimate, and was invited to stay at the palace. The Princess looked after his comfort with as motherly an affection as Frau von Breuning had shown. The etiquette of the palace, however, especially the dressing for dinner at a set time, disagreed with



## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

Beethoven's Bohemian nature; he began to dine at a tavern very frequently, and finally he engaged outside lodgings. Far from being offended at his unmannerly behaviour, the Prince and Princess forgave him freely and always kept for the wayward composer a warm place in their hearts. On his part too there was a sincere affection for his kind and generous friends.

Beethoven began to take lessons from Haydn, but these were never very satisfactory, and the pupil considered that his master did not give him enough time and attention. About a year later Haydn went to England, and Beethoven then studied both playing and composition with several of the best musicians of the city. He gained much from the teaching of Albrechtsberger in especial, a famous contrapuntist of his time.

Beethoven was irresistible when he seated himself at the piano to extemporize. "His improvisation was most brilliant and striking," wrote Karl Czerny, one of his pupils. "In whatever company he might be, he knew how to produce such an effect upon the listeners that frequently all eyes would be wet, and some listeners would sob; there was something wonderful in his expressive style, the beauty and originality of his ideas and his spirited way of playing." Strange to say, the emotion he aroused in his hearers seemed to find no response in Beethoven himself. He would sometimes laugh at it, and at other times he would resent it, saying: "We artists don't want tears, we want applause." He was always suspicious of those whose confidence he had won by his genius and force of character, and this was a cause of much suffering to himself. He was most sympathetic, however, to those whom he loved, and his anger was of short duration, though bitter while it lasted.

In appearance Beethoven was short and stockily built, while his features were by no means good. A mass of dark

## BEETHOVEN

---

hair surmounted a high, broad forehead. His eyes were black and bright, dilating when he was lost in thought, as though he were a man inspired. Often he was gloomy, but when he smiled it was with a radiant brightness. His hands were strong and the fingers short and flattened with much practice. He was always particular about the position of the hands in playing. As a conductor he is said to have made many movements, crouching below the desk in soft passages, gradually lifting himself up during a *crescendo* until at the loudest parts he would rise to his full height with arms extended, and even spring in the air as though he would float into space.

As a teacher he showed none of the impatience and carelessness that were seen in his personal habits. He would insist on a pupil repeating a passage carefully a great number of times until it could be played to the master's satisfaction. He did not mind if a few false notes were sounded, but if his pupil failed to grasp the meaning of a passage or gave it the wrong expression his anger would be aroused. The wrong notes he considered were an accident; the wrong meaning showed a lack of knowledge of feeling.

"Beethoven was passionately fond of Nature, and much of his music was as much an interpretation of Nature's moods as are Corot's landscapes. Most of his greatest works were conceived on lonely walks in the country. Like the painter, he always carried a notebook with him and put down in musical characters the thoughts that were suggested to him by the scenes and sights around him. There are constant alterations in his notebooks, showing the infinite pains he took in working up his compositions out of the ideas as they first occurred to him; and it is a striking example of the truth which Edison put in homely phrase, 'Inspiration is nine-tenths perspiration,' that some of Beethoven's most marvellous compositions were developed

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

from rather ordinary conceptions.”<sup>1</sup> As soon as spring had come he would leave his lodgings in the hot city and steal away to some quiet spot where he could hold communion with nature. Often he would select a tree where a forking branch made a natural seat near the ground, and he would climb up and sit in it for hours, lost in thought.

In the summer of 1800 Beethoven sketched out the plan of his oratorio, *The Mount of Olives*, while in his favourite woodland surroundings; leaning against the trunk of a lime-tree, with his eyes fixed upon the network of leaves and branches above him, he gained his inspiration for this magnificent work. His only opera, *Fidelio*, and his third symphony, the *Eroica*, were also composed by him in the open air. He wrote once to a friend: “No man loves the country more than I. Woods, trees, and rocks give the response which man requires. Every tree seems to say, ‘Holy, Holy.’”

While he was still a young man Beethoven began to develop symptoms of deafness, and the fear of becoming a victim to this malady made him even more sensitive than he had been before. When he was about thirty his deafness became serious, and he was filled with a deep depression, feeling that now his life-work was at an end. Various treatments were tried, and at one time a temporary cure was effected by the skill of a Dr Schmidt, to whom out of gratitude he dedicated his Septet, arranged as a Trio. By Dr Schmidt’s advice the composer went to the little village of Heiligenstadt (which means Holy City) in the summer of 1820, in the hope that the calm, sweet environment would act as a balm to his troubled mind. During this period of rest and quiet his health improved to a certain extent, but from this time onward he was obliged by his deafness to give up the conducting of his works.

It might be thought that a man of Beethoven’s retiring

<sup>1</sup> *The Workshop of the Mind.*

## BEETHOVEN

---

disposition and brusque manners would not care much for women, but, strange to say, he was greatly attracted by them. He was always very chivalrous toward them, and though he was frequently in love it was usually with a Platonic affection. He protested a most passionate love, however, for the Countess Giulietta Guicciardi, and in a measure she returned his ardour ; but for some reason the marriage which he so much desired was never brought about. He wrote her the most adoring letters, and she was doubtless his "immortal beloved" whose name vibrates through the Adagio of the *Moonlight Sonata*, which is dedicated to her.

Beethoven conceived a tender affection for Bettina von Arnim, Goethe's little friend, and also for the Countess Marie Erdödy, to whom he dedicated the two fine Trios (*Op.* 70). He was unfortunate in his attachments, for the ladies were always of a higher social standing than he could boast, but as he constantly mixed with people of rank and culture it was only natural that he should prefer the aristocrat to the ordinary woman of his own class. Thus it happened that several times he staked his chances of happiness on a love that he knew could never attain fruition—and yet no man ever needed a kind, helpful, sympathetic wife more than did our poet-musician.

In 1804 Beethoven completed one of his greatest symphonies, the *Eroica*, which he had planned in his mind two years before. Originally he had intended to write it in honour of Napoleon, whose character and achievements he had greatly admired, but when his hero entered Paris in triumph and was proclaimed Emperor Beethoven's worship turned to contempt. He seized his symphony, tore the dedication page to shreds, and threw the work to the other end of the room. It was a long time before he would look at the music again, but finally he consented to publish it under the title by which it is known to-day.



## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

Beethoven was a tireless worker, producing an almost incredible number of great compositions. Music was the language in which he expressed his emotions, and by studying his music one can learn how loving and lovable a character he bore. "I live only in my music," he wrote, "and no sooner is one thing done than the next is begun. I often work at two or three things at once."

In 1815 one of Beethoven's two brothers, Karl, died, leaving his son to his Uncle Ludwig as a solemn charge. The composer took up this task generously and unselfishly. He was glad to have the young Karl near him, one of his own kin to love. But as his nephew grew to young manhood he proved himself utterly unworthy of his affection, treating his uncle shamefully, and even stealing money from him, although his wants had always been generously supplied. Karl became a disgrace to the family, and there is no doubt that his dissolute habits saddened the master's life, estranged him from his friends, and hastened his death.

During his last years Beethoven was totally deaf and often weak and ill, yet he continued to create work after work of the highest beauty and grandeur. But his simplicity and modesty remained throughout his life, and in 1824 he wrote to a friend: "I feel as if I had scarcely written more than a few notes."

Beethoven died on March 26, 1827, at the age of fifty-six, and was laid to rest in the Währinger Cemetery near Vienna. Unlike Mozart, he was buried with much honour, twenty thousand people following him to the grave. One of these was Schubert, who had visited him on his deathbed and who now acted as one of his torchbearers. Several of Beethoven's own compositions were sung by a choir of male voices, accompanied by trombones, and at the graveside Hummel laid three laurel wreaths upon the casket.



## VIII

### KARL MARIA FRIEDRICH ERNST VON WEBER

(1786-1826)

**A**S we have already seen in the life-stories of several musicians, the career they were to follow was often decided by their father, who determined to make them into wonder-children either for monetary gain or for the honour of the family. The subject of this story is an example of such a preconceived plan.

Franz Anton von Weber, who was himself a capable musician, had always cherished an ambition to give a wonder-child to the world. He believed that such children need not be born musicians, but that with the proper amount of care and training they could be made into infant prodigies. He had formerly been a wealthy man, but at the time his son was born he had been reduced to travelling about Saxony at the head of a troupe of theatrical folk called "Weber's Company of Comedians."

Karl Maria Friedrich Ernst, to give the boy his full name, was born on December 18, 1786, at Eutin, a small town in Lower Saxony. He was the first child of a second marriage, and before the babe could even talk his father had made up his mind to train him as a musical genius. It is not recorded what his young mother, a delicate girl of seventeen, thought of this scheme, but probably her ideas about her baby's future did not greatly concern the father. Mother and child were obliged to follow in the train of the wandering comedians, so little Karl was brought up amid the properties of stage life. Scenery,

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

canvas, paints, and stage-lights were the materials upon which his early imagination was developed. He learned stage language with his first baby words, and it is therefore no wonder that he naturally turned to writing for the stage.

As a child he was neither healthy nor robust, but this is hardly surprising, as he was not allowed to run about the fields with other children, enjoying the fresh air, the flowers, sunshine, and blue sky. He had always to stay indoors, where the scenery consisted of cardboard castles and painted canvas streets. Such treatment was naturally not conducive to making him into a sturdy child. Then, before he was six years old, a violin was put into his hand, and if his progress on it was considered too slow by his impatient father he was given many raps and blows by way of an incentive to harder work.

His training in music was of an erratic nature, as the comedians were constantly travelling from one place to another, and the boy's teachers were thus constantly changing also. After a time he was taken in hand by Michael Haydn, a celebrated musician and brother of the more famous Josef. Michael seldom gave music lessons, but he was greatly interested in this small boy and gladly undertook his musical education.

Karl's genius began to show itself in his early teens, when he wrote for the lyric stage. Two of his comic operas, *The Dumb Girl of the Forest*, and *Peter Schmoll and his Neighbours*, were produced while he was yet a boy, but neither of them proved a great success in the eyes of the public.

When Karl was seventeen his father decided that he should go to Vienna in order that he should meet there all the great musicians of the day. The boy was lively, witty, with pleasant manners and an amiable disposition, and he soon became a favourite in the highest musical



Chubbey  
3



circles. He was at the most impressionable age, and he thoroughly enjoyed the gaities of the life he was leading. He also did some serious studying under the famous Abbé Vogler, who recommended him to the conductorship of the Breslau Opera House in the following year.

The post which Karl now took up in 1804 was a very difficult one for a boy of eighteen, requiring much tact, and in a year's time he was so disheartened that he resigned. The jealousy and opposition of the older musicians, who were annoyed at finding themselves under the leadership of such a youth, proved too great for him. During this year, however, he had found time to compose the greater part of his opera *Rubezahl*.

For the next few years Karl had a very chequered career. From Breslau he went to Karlsruhe, where he entered the service of Prince Eugène, and for about a year he was a brilliant figure at the Court. Then war-clouds gathered, and the gay Court life came to an end. The whole social state of Germany now altered, and he found that music could not support him under the prevailing conditions. He was now obliged to earn his livelihood in some other way, and he became private secretary to Prince Ludwig of Würtemberg, whose Court was held at Stuttgart. Here again the young composer found the gay, dissolute life of the Court full of temptations, but he had considerable time for his compositions, and his opera *Silvana* was the result. During the Stuttgart period his financial position was so unsound that on one occasion he had to spend several days in prison for debt.

Karl now began to look round for some method of recruiting his fortunes, and decided to travel to other towns and thus make known his art. In Mannheim, Darmstadt, and Baden he gave concerts, bringing out in each place some of his newer compositions, and earning enough at each concert to last for a few weeks.



## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

In 1810, when he was about twenty-four, he finished his pretty opera *Abu Hassan*. It was performed on February 6, 1811, and met with a very gratifying reception. At the suggestion of his venerable master, Vogler, Karl had written the dedication to the Grand Duke, who was so highly delighted with it that he sent the composer a purse of gold to the value of about forty pounds. The Grand Duke also took a hundred and twenty tickets, and the performance made a clear profit of over two hundred florins.

After this success Karl made a tour of the principal German cities, giving concerts in Munich, Prague, Berlin, Dresden, and other places. Wherever he went he was warmly welcomed, and his talents and charming manners made friends for him everywhere. In Prague especially he found the highest and noblest aristocracy greet his arrival with joy.

Almost as soon as he had entered Prague Weber called on Liebich, who was the director of the theatre. "So you are *the* Weber!" exclaimed the invalid director. "I suppose you want me to buy your two operas. One fills an evening, the other doesn't. Very well, I will give fifteen hundred florins for the two. Is it a bargain?"

Weber accepted the terms, and promised to return in the following spring to conduct the operas. When he came back to Prague to fulfil his promise the result was far beyond his dreams—for not only were the operas a success, but he was offered the post of music director of the Prague theatre, as this had just become vacant. The salary was two thousand florins, with a benefit concert at a guaranteed sum of one thousand more, and three months' leave of absence every year. Weber was now able to pay off his debts and begin life again, which, as he then wrote, "was a delight to him."

The composer now threw himself heart and soul into

improving the orchestra in his charge, and before long he had drilled it into a high state of excellence. He put many of his new operas on the stage in quick succession, and composed several fine piano sonatas, a set of *National Songs*, and the cantata *Kampf und Sieg* (Struggle and Victory), which soon made the gifted composer popular throughout Germany. He worked industriously for three years in this way, but the success he achieved created enemies for him, and in 1816 he resigned his post because of their envy and ill-feeling.

Weber had many kind and influential friends in Prague who admired his zeal and efficiency as a music director, and Count Vitzhum, who was one of their number, made an effort to secure a post in Dresden for the musician. On Christmas morning 1816 Weber was told that he had obtained the appointment. He wrote at once to Caroline Brandt, a charming singer to whom he was engaged, and who had created the title-*rôle* in his opera of *Silvana*:

“Long did I look on Count Vitzhum’s letter without daring to open it. Did it contain joy or sorrow? At length I took and broke the seal. It was joy! I am Kapellmeister to his Majesty the King of Saxony. I must now rig myself out in true Court style. Perhaps I ought to wear a pigtail to please the Dresdeners. What do you say? I ought at least to have an extra kiss from you for this good news.”

Before finally taking up the post in Dresden Weber went to look over the situation. On nearer view the prospect was not so alluring as it had at first appeared. At Dresden no music had ever been tolerated but Italian opera, and there were many talented Italian singers to interpret this music in the city. This rival faction was strongly opposed to Weber’s attempts to promote German opera, but the composer was determined to conquer at all costs. He was encouraged by a new national spirit which

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

was then stirring in the people, and finally he was successful in his efforts. He wrote to a friend: "The Italians have moved heaven, earth, and hell also, to swallow up the whole German opera and its promoter. But they have found in me a precious tough morsel; I am not easily swallowed." His was the same kind of fight that Handel waged in England, and that Gluck fought against the Piccinnists.

The first opera which the new conductor produced was *Joseph and his Brethren*, by Méhul. He drilled the orchestra much more carefully than usual, and at the beginning he had to contend with the sulkiness of some of its members; eventually, however, the rebellious spirits saw the justice of his strict instruction and began to take a pride in their work. The opera was produced on January 30, 1817, and the whole production passed off remarkably well. The King was present with all his Court, and during the whole performance he never gave one of those coughs which were looked upon as a sign of his disapproval.

In spite of the Italian opposition, which continued to make itself felt, Weber was at last successful in establishing German opera as a State institution, and he was appointed musical director for life. He now had an established position and was able to wed his beloved Caroline. The marriage took place on November 4, 1817, and a quotation from his diary shows that the talented musician had now become a serious and high-souled man: "May God bless our union, and grant me strength and power to make my beloved Lina as happy and contented as my inmost heart would desire. May His mercy lead me in all things."

After his happy union with Caroline, Weber entered upon the busiest and most brilliant period of his life. His music became richer, nobler, and more beautiful; he seemed to be inspired with new life and energy, and as

a result his works became known before long all over Europe. His mind was filled with original themes struggling for expression. First there was the Mass in E Flat, a beautiful, original work; then a festal cantata, *Nature and Love*, written to celebrate the birthday of the Queen of Saxony. After this came the *Jubilee Cantata*, composed to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the reign of Augustus of Saxony. Of this, at first, only the overture was given, as the Italian faction prevented a performance of the whole work, but when eventually the whole cantata was heard it made a great sensation.

Now came a *Jubilee Mass* and some pianoforte pieces, among them being the charming *Invitation to the Valse*, with which every one is familiar. Not content with the writing of all these works, the composer was also busy with his greatest opera, *Der Freischütz*, at the same time. He forwarded the score of this opera to the director of the Berlin theatre on May 8, 1820, and it was immediately put into rehearsal. But the tireless worker, before the rehearsals had proceeded very far, had finished his important opera *Preciosa* and dispatched it to the same director. The second opera was brought out first, and this was just as it should have been, for the public needed educating up to the greater composition.

*Preciosa* was founded on a Spanish story, *The Gipsy of Madrid*, and for it Weber has written some of his most charming melodies, full of Spanish colour, life, and vivacity. Nowadays the opera is neglected, but the overture is often to be heard. It is an evidence of the skill of the artist that the overture to each of his operas contains the leading themes and melodies of the opera itself. His wonderful accuracy was noted when it was found that there was not a single erasure or correction in the whole of the original score of *Der Freischütz*, which his widow presented to the Royal Library in Berlin.



## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

On June 18, 1821, came the first performance of Weber's masterpiece, *Der Freischütz*. For hours beforehand the theatre was besieged by eager crowds, and when at last the doors were opened they rushed into their places. The whole house was soon filled from pit to gallery, and when the composer entered the orchestra the roar of applause which greeted him seemed as though it would never end. As the performance proceeded the listeners became more and more carried away by the music, and at the close there was a wild scene of excitement. The success had been tremendous, and frequent repetitions were demanded, which soon filled the treasury of the theatre. Happiness reigned everywhere among the performers—but the composer was the most highly delighted of them all. In a short time the melodies were played on every piano in Germany and whistled by every street-urchin. The fame of the opera spread like lightning over Europe, and quickly reached England. In London the whole atmosphere seemed to vibrate with its melodies. In Paris the opera did not please at first, probably because it was so thoroughly German, but when it made a second appearance as *Robin des Bois* (Robin of the Forest) it was so successful that it was performed some three hundred and fifty times before its withdrawal.

Weber was a ceaseless worker. Two years after the production of *Der Freischütz* he completed the opera of *Euryanthe*. The libretto was the work of a half-demented woman, Helmine von Chezy, but Weber set out to make the opera the best he had yet produced, and to the story he has joined some wonderful music. *Euryanthe* was his favourite work. Two hours before its first performance he wrote to his much-loved wife: "I rely on God and my *Euryanthe*." It was produced at the Kärnthnerthor Theatre, in Vienna, on October 25, 1823. The composer, though weak and ill, made the long journey to the great



city in order that he might introduce his favourite piece of work to the Viennese. After its performance he wrote to his wife: "Thank God, as I do, beloved wife, for the glorious success of *Euryanthe*. Weary as I am, I must still say a sweet good-night to my beloved Lina, and cry 'Victory!' All the company seemed in a state of ecstasy; singers, chorus, orchestra—all were drunk, as it were, with joy."

The title-*rôle* of the opera was taken by Henrietta Sontag, a young girl still in her teens, but already giving high promise of the great things she achieved a few years later.

Strange to say, a short time after its first appearance *Euryanthe* failed to attract. One reason might have been the poor libretto, another was perhaps the rumour—started, it is said, by no less an authority than the great master Beethoven—that the music of the opera was "only a collection of diminished sevenths." Weber lost no time in laying his score before Beethoven, who said that he should have visited him *before*, not *after*, the performance. He suggested to him that he should do what he himself had done to *Fidelio*—cut out nearly a third of the score. Weber took this advice and remade parts of the opera where he deemed it necessary.

The strain of the production of *Euryanthe* told severely on the composer's delicate health, and he returned to Dresden in a state of exhaustion. Official duties were pressing, and there was no rest for him here. His lungs were badly affected, and the malady made rapid progress; he began to fear that he would not have long to live with his wife and children.

But Weber quickly shook off his apathy and took up his pen again. His fame was known all over Europe, and many tempting offers came to him from all directions. One of these was from Covent Garden Theatre, and in the

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

summer of 1824 he visited the English capital. Charles Kemble, who was then the director of Covent Garden, asked Weber to write a new opera for production in the theatre, and the subject decided upon was *Oberon*, taken from an old French romance. Weber at once set to work on the music of this fairy opera, and with the exception of the overture he had finished the work in time to bring it to London in 1826. He was ill and suffering on February 7, when he left home, and it seemed as though he were bidding good-bye to his wife and family for ever.

When Weber arrived in London Sir George Smart invited him to take up his residence in his house. Here he had every comfort, and a beautiful piano was placed at his disposal by one of the first makers in London. "No king could be served with greater love and affection in all things," he wrote; "I cannot be sufficiently grateful to Heaven for the blessings which surround me." In such happy circumstances he composed the beautiful overture to *Oberon*, completing it only a few days before the first performance of the opera.

On April 12, 1826, *Oberon* was performed at Covent Garden before an audience which filled the house from pit to dome, and the success was overwhelming. The next day the composer was in a highly nervous and exhausted condition, but he felt that he must keep his promise to Kemble to conduct the first twelve performances of the opera. He was to have a benefit concert, and he hoped by this means to have a good sum to take home to his little family. Sad to relate, on May 26, which was the evening chosen for the concert, a heavy rain fell and the hall was nearly empty. After the concert was over Weber was so weak that he had to be almost carried to his own room. He was eager to go home, but the physician advised him to postpone the journey. "I must go to my own,"

## WEBER

---

cried the composer; "I must. Let me see them once more, and then God's will be done."

The following morning, when the composer was called, all was still in his chamber—he had passed away peacefully in his sleep.

Weber was buried in London at St Mary's, Moorfields, but his last wish—to return home—was finally granted. Eighteen years later, in 1844, his remains were removed to Dresden and reinterred in the town which had witnessed so many of his triumphs.

## IX

### FRANZ PETER SCHUBERT

(1797-1828)

**N**EAR the fortifications of Vienna, in the Lichten-thal quarter, there stands an old house which bears the sign of the Red Crab. Above the door is a marble tablet stating that here was born Franz Schubert ; at the right of his name is a lyre crowned with a star, and at the left is a laurel wreath, inside which is inscribed the date of his birth, January 31, 1797.

This, then, was the humble birthplace of "the most poetical composer who ever lived," as Liszt said of him—the man who in the short compass of his thirty-one years of life composed over six hundred songs, eight symphonies, several operas, Masses, chamber works, and many beautiful pianoforte pieces.

Schubert's father kept a school in Vienna. He had a family of four boys and one girl to provide for, and nothing but his schoolmaster's pay to depend upon, so obviously they were by no means wealthy. But by careful management the mother contrived to make both ends meet, and as they were all devoted to one another they formed a very happy family indeed. When he was very young little Franz showed a decided love of music, and he would try to pick out tiny pieces of melody of his own invention on a battered old piano which they possessed. He made friends with a young apprentice in a piano warehouse in the city, and he was highly delighted when his chum took him to his place of business and allowed him to play his tunes on a fine piano there.







## SCHUBERT

---

When Franz was seven years old he began to have music lessons at home, his father teaching him how to play the violin and his big brother Ignaz the piano. But very soon, in his eagerness to learn, the boy outstripped their teachings and it was decided that he should study with the parish choir-master, Holzer. From this new master he learned to play the piano, violin, and organ; he also learned singing and thorough bass. Soon Holzer was astonished at the boy's progress, and declared: "Whenever I begin to teach him anything I find he knows it already: I never had such a pupil before."

By the time Franz was eleven his voice had developed so well that he was given the place of head soprano in the parish church. He also played violin solos whenever they occurred in the service. At home he had begun to compose and write down little piano pieces and songs, and his parents thought that if his remarkable talent were cultivated further he might be able to help to swell the slender purse of the family. As a first step to his advancement they wished to send him to the Konvikt, or choir-school, which trained boys for the Imperial Chapel, for if Franz could prove his ability to enter this school he would receive free education in return for his services.

One fine morning in October 1808 Franz presented himself for examination by the Court Kapellmeister and the singing-master. He was dressed in homespun grey, his bushy black hair was covered by an old-fashioned hat, and spectacles shielded his bright, near-sighted eyes. The other boys jeered at his odd appearance, but his good humour never left him. After he had solved all the problems given to him and it was his turn to sing, his rendering of the trial pieces was so astonishing that he was passed in at once and ordered to put on the uniform of the imperial choristers.

The boy soon found plenty of work to fill his time and

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

occupy his mind. He had to take a prominent place in the school orchestra, and in their daily practising the boys learned the overtures and symphonies of Mozart and Haydn, and even Beethoven. The young chorister's favourite was Mozart's Symphony in G Minor, in which he said he heard the angels singing. From the first day he entered the school the leader of the orchestra had been attracted to the lad's playing, for he showed such precision and understanding. One day Franz mustered up courage to talk a little to the big conductor, whose name was Spaun, and he confessed that he had composed quite a number of pieces already. When he added, in a burst of confidence, that he would like to compose every day, but that he could not afford to buy the music-paper, Spaun's sympathies were aroused, and he saw to it that in future the boy was supplied with the necessary paper.

Franz had soon made such progress on the violin that he began to take first-violin parts, and when the conductor was absent he was asked to lead the orchestra. Indeed, by his deep earnestness and sincerity, as well as by his ability, the gifted boy had become a power in the school.

On Sundays and holidays, when Franz went home to see his people, it was a very happy reunion for all. If he brought home a new string quartet the father would take out his 'cello, Ignaz and Ferdinand would take first and second violins, and the young composer the viola. After it had been played through all the performers would discuss the composition and offer their criticism. He was now beginning to compose at such an astonishing rate that it was difficult to keep him supplied with music-paper. One of his works of this time was a fantasia for two players, in twelve movements. Then came a first attempt at song-writing, a long piece which also contained twelve movements and was in melancholy mood.

Franz remained at the Konvikt for five years, and as

## SCHUBERT

---

he had decided to give himself entirely to music there was no reason why he should stay there any longer. At the end of the year 1813 he left, celebrating his departure by the composition of his first symphony in honour of Dr Lang, the musical director. The lad, now seventeen, stood at the beginning of his career; he was full of hope and energy, and determined to follow in the footsteps of the great masters of music. Of all his compositions so far produced his songs seemed to be the most spontaneous; he probably did not guess that he was to open up new paths in this field.

Hardly had he left the Konvikt than he was drafted for the army. This meant several years of virtual captivity, for conscription could not be avoided. His only alternative was to return home and become a teacher in his father's school, and he chose this as the lesser evil. This course, he knew, would assure him a certain amount of leisure in which he could indulge in compositions. We can imagine him installed as teacher of the infant class and realize how distasteful to him was the daily round of school-work; we can guess how he must have longed for the end of the day so that he might put on paper all the lovely themes that had occurred to him during school-hours.

At this time Franz made the acquaintance of the Grob family, consisting of a mother, son, and daughter, who lived in the district of Lichtenthal. All three were musical. Thérèse Grob had a fine voice, and she delighted in the songs Schubert brought her to sing, while her brother Heinrich could play both piano and 'cello. Many happy evenings filled with music were spent together by the young people. At the Konvikt, too, each new piece written by the young composer was gladly welcomed.

Although he had already achieved a certain amount of success Schubert did not forget his old master, Holzer, the organist of the little church which the composer

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

regularly attended. During 1814 Schubert composed his first Mass, which was performed on October 16 and excited so much interest that it was repeated ten days later at the Augustine Church. Franz conducted, Holzer led the choir, Ferdinand sat at the organ, and Thérèse sang the soprano solos. Among the audience sat old Salieri, the Court Kapellmeister of Vienna, with whom Beethoven had studied. Salieri praised the boy for his work and said that he should become his pupil, and for some time after this he gave him daily lessons. Schubert's father was so proud and happy that he bought a five-octave piano for his son to celebrate the event.

Schubert added many compositions to his list that year, among them seventeen songs, one of which is the famous *Gretchen at the Spinning-wheel*. He now made the acquaintance of the poet Johann Mayrhofer, and their friendship proved of benefit to both, for the poet produced many verses that the composer might set them to music. In the following year, 1815, Schubert wrote one hundred and thirty-seven songs, six operas, and much music for the piano and for the organ. Twenty-nine of these songs were written in the month of August, eight being created on one day, seven on another. Some of these were quite long, making between twenty and thirty pages when printed.

In 1816 a new friend came into Schubert's life, a young man of about his own age, who intended to enter the University of Vienna. This Franz Schober was a great lover of music, and, being acquainted with some of Schubert's manuscript songs, he lost no time in seeking out the composer when he reached Vienna. He found the young musician at his desk very busily writing, for school-work was over and now he could compose in peace. The two became friends at once and were soon talking as though they had always known one another. In a few words Schubert told his new friend how he was situated at home



## SCHUBERT

---

and how much he disliked the daily drudgery of school-teaching. Schober at once suggested that they should make a home together, as this would free the composer from the irksome life he was living and enable him to give his whole attention to art. The proposal delighted Schubert, and his father willingly gave his consent. The composer was now free at last. He took up his abode in his new friend's lodgings, and at first he insisted on giving him some musical instruction in return for his kindness—but this arrangement did not last long, for Schubert greatly disliked teaching of any kind.

After Schubert had remained with Schober for six months the student's young brother came to live with him, and the composer thus had to find another home for himself. Teaching, of course, was distasteful to him, but he had to turn to it now in order to earn his own living. He was offered a post as music teacher in the family of Count Johann Esterházy, which he accepted. This meant that he must live with the family in their Vienna home in winter and go with them to their country seat at Zelész in Hungary in the summer. The etiquette of aristocratic life was a great change for him from the free life he had enjoyed with his friends who idolized him and his beautiful music. But there were many comforts amid his new surroundings; the family was musical, the duties were not heavy, and Schubert was by no means unhappy. He found a great deal of leisure time to devote to his compositions, and these flowed from his pen in a constant stream.

At the end of 1818 Schubert returned to Vienna and lodged in the same house as the poet Mayrhofer. In the following year he made a tour with the famous operatic singer Johann Vogl, to whom he had been introduced when he shared rooms with Schober. His student-friend had constantly talked to the great singer about the gifts of Schubert and begged him to visit him, and at last Vogl

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

had consented. When they had arrived at the lodgings they found the composer hard at work, as usual, with music-sheets covering the tables and chairs, and littering up the floor. Vogl, who was accustomed to mixing with the highest society, made himself quite at home and tried to put Schubert at his ease, but the composer had remained shy and confused. The singer then began to look over his manuscripts, and on parting he shook hands warmly, remarking: "There is stuff in you, but you squander your fine thoughts instead of making the most of them." Vogl had been much impressed by what he had seen that day, and he repeated his visit. Before long the two had become fast friends.

By the time he was twenty-four Schubert had composed a great quantity of music, but none of it had as yet been published. He was almost unknown, and publishers were unwilling to bring out the works of an unknown man—and this although his songs had won instant recognition and success when performed by good artists, as had been done several times. Johann Vogl, for one, had sung the *Erl King* at a concert patronized by royalty in March 1821, and storms of applause had greeted Schubert's composition.

In these circumstances two friends of Schubert's undertook to publish the *Erl King* at their own expense. When they announced their plan at the Sonnleithner mansion, where musical evenings were frequently held, one hundred copies of the song were immediately subscribed for by the audience. With such encouragement the engraving of the *Erl King* and of *Gretchen at the Spinning-wheel* was carried out forthwith, and the music publishers consented to sell the copies on commission. The plan succeeded beyond all their hopes, and more songs were called for; by the time that seven had appeared the publishers were willing to take the risk of engraving other songs themselves.

For a second time Schubert went to the country seat

## SCHUBERT

---

of the Esterházy at Zelész. While there he heard many Hungarian melodies sung or played by the gipsies, or by servants of the castle, and some of these he has used in his *Divertissement à la Hongroise*.

In 1825 Vogl and Schubert made a second tour, introducing several new songs of the composer, which met with great applause. At this time Schubert wrote to his brother: "When Vogl sings and I accompany him we seem for the moment to be one." And Vogl wrote of the songs that they were "truly divine inspirations."

Schubert was always busy with his melodies, but they produced for him little or no money, probably because he undervalued everything he did. Often after he had accomplished a fine composition he would put it away in some obscure place and forget all about it. He would write down his music wherever it occurred to him on any scrap of paper that came to his hand—the exquisite song *Hark! Hark! the Lark!* was jotted down in a beer-garden on the back of a bill of fare.

But the physical strength of the composer was not robust enough to stand the strain he imposed upon it. Then, too, when his funds were low, as often happened, he took poor lodgings and denied himself the necessary nourishing food. If he had had some sympathetic companion to look after his material needs his life might have been prolonged for many a year. But, as it was, with no one to help and advise him, often weighed down with hunger and poverty, he was induced to sell the copyrights of twelve of his best songs, including the *Erl King* and the *Wanderer*, for a sum equal to about eighty pounds. It is said that the publishers made on the *Wanderer* alone, up to the year 1861, a sum of about eleven hundred pounds. Schumann once said truly of him that "everything he touched turned to music." He curtailed his hours of sleep more and more, writing late at night and rising early

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

the next day in order to set down on paper the beautiful songs that came into his mind. It is said of him that he even slept in his spectacles to save the trouble and time of putting them on in the morning.

In his boyhood, as we see in his earlier compositions, Schubert was most influenced by the music of Mozart. Beethoven was a great master to him then, but as time went on the spell of his music grew still stronger. In 1822 he dedicated to him a set of Variations on a French air he had written and published, and he greatly wished to present them in person. He was too shy to go alone, however, and at last Diabelli, the publisher, went with him. Beethoven was courteous but formal, pushing paper and pencil toward his guests, as he was now totally deaf. Schubert was too shy now even to write a single word, but he produced his Variations. Beethoven seemed pleased with the dedication and looked through the music. Soon he found something in it of which he did not approve, but when he pointed it out the young composer completely lost his presence of mind and fled from the house. But Beethoven really liked the music and often played it to his nephew.

Five years later, during his last illness, a collection of some sixty of Schubert's songs was placed in Beethoven's hands. He turned them over and over with amazement and delight. "Truly Schubert has the divine fire," he exclaimed, and asked to see the composer of such beautiful music. Schubert came and was allowed to have a talk with him before all the other friends who were waiting. When Schubert paid a second visit to his bedside it was almost the end of the great master's life, though he was able to recognize all those who were gathered around him. Overcome with emotion, Schubert went out of his room.

Two weeks later Schubert was one of the torchbearers who accompanied the great composer to his last resting-



## SCHUBERT

---

place. How little did the young man of thirty think<sup>2</sup> that he was soon to follow!

Schubert's life was at this time full of disappointments. He had always longed to write for the lyric stage, and he composed numerous operas, which were always rejected for one reason or another. The last, *Fierabras*, was on the point of being produced when it was suddenly withdrawn. The composer became greatly dejected and believed himself to be the most unhappy being on earth. But fortunately a little while later his optimism again rose triumphant, and the stream of production resumed its flow. His temperament was such that at one moment he would be utterly despairing, the next he would have forgotten his troubles and be engaged in writing a song, symphony, or sonata. Constant work now filled his days, and the last year of his life was productive of some of his finest works.

Toward the end of October 1828 Schubert began to show signs of a serious breakdown. He was living with his brother Ferdinand in one of the suburbs of the city. In the early part of November he had revived a little and was able to resume his walks in the neighbourhood; then followed a relapse, and for eleven days he took neither food nor drink. On November 19, 1828, he passed peacefully away, in the thirty-second year of his life.

Schubert's old father, the schoolmaster of the Lichten-thal quarter, desired to have his son buried in the little cemetery near his former home, but his brother Ferdinand knew that it was the wish of Franz to lie near Beethoven in the Währinger Cemetery. There he was accordingly buried, and in the following year a monument was erected above his grave by his friends and admirers, bearing this inscription above his name:

Music has here entombed a rich treasure, but much fairer hopes.



## X

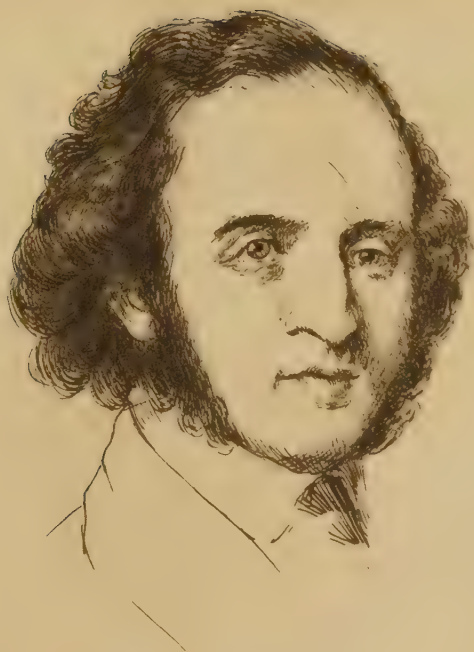
### FELIX MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY

(1809-47)

**M**ENDELSSOHN the composer was given the name of Felix, which is the Latin word for 'happy' or 'fortunate,' and his life proved how well he deserved the title. The son of a rich banker, surrounded with everything that wealth can give, blessed with a most cheerful disposition, rich in the charming personality which made friends for him on all sides, it was indeed no wonder that he was happy. Many of the great musicians have had to contend with poverty and privation, and their music often expresses their bitterness and sorrows. With Mendelssohn it was different—he was care-free and happy, and his music reflects the joyous contentment of his life.

In Hamburg, where the Mendelssohns originally lived, there is a tablet placed above the doorway of the house where Felix was born on February 3, 1809, and a likeness of the composer is encircled by a wreath of laurel. The building is in good preservation and faces one of the fine squares of the city, with a handsome church on the opposite side, but the ground floor has now been converted into public dining-rooms.

In 1811 the French soldiers occupied the town and made life very unpleasant for the German residents. Those who could, therefore, sought refuge in other cities and towns, and among those who successfully made their escape was the Mendelssohn-Bartholdy family—the name of Bartholdy belonged to Felix's mother before



John Keats Esq. Bartholomew



## MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY

---

marriage and was used to distinguish this family from other branches of Mendelssohns. Abraham Mendelssohn-Bartholdy with his wife and children fled to Berlin, and lived for some years with the grandmother on the Neue Promenade, a fine, broad street with houses on one side only, the opposite side descending in a grassy slope to the lazily flowing canal.

The children consisted of Felix, Fanny, who was his elder by a year or two, Rebekka, and little Paul. In Berlin they led a very happy life amid ideal surroundings. Felix very early showed a great fondness for music, and when he was only four years old his mother began to give him short music lessons with his sister Fanny, to whom he was devotedly attached. They made such good progress that after a while professional musicians were engaged to teach them the piano, violin, and musical composition as part of their regular education. As they had also to study Greek, Latin, drawing, and the usual school subjects their time was always fully occupied, and they were obliged to rise at five in the morning to begin their work. But they were a joyous couple, appreciating play and work equally, and nothing could ever damp their high spirits. Both began to compose very quickly, and often peals of laughter would be heard when Felix attempted to improvise upon some comical incident in their play.

It was not long before they made more ambitious attempts at composition and began to write little operas. But they felt that it was useless to do this unless the operas were performed, and Felix was very anxious to have an orchestra to try the operatic effects. At this time he was only a little over twelve years old, and it might seem impossible for a boy of his age to have an orchestra—but love and money can accomplish wonderful things. His father allowed him to select a small company of musicians from the Court orchestra to perform his compositions.

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

Before the first performance was quite ready Felix felt that he would like some one to be present who could really judge the merits of his little opera, and for this purpose he invited Karl Zelter, his old professor of thorough bass and composition, who was the director of the Berlin Singakademie. Zelter agreed to accept this delicate office, and a large number of friends were invited for the occasion. The lad Felix conducted the band of sedate musicians modestly, but without embarrassment, standing on a footstool before his men and waving his baton with the mien of a little general.

This was only the beginning of a series of weekly musical evenings at the Mendelssohn home. Felix, with his dark curls, his shining eyes, and charming manners, was the life of everything he undertook. He often conducted his little compositions, but he did not monopolize the whole time. Sometimes all four children took part, Fanny at the piano, Rebekka singing, Paul playing the 'cello, and Felix at the desk. Old Zelter was usually present, and though he was averse to praising his pupils he would often say a few encouraging words at the close.

Before he was much more than twelve Felix had composed fifty or sixty pieces of music, including a trio for the piano and strings, containing three movements, several sonatas for the piano, some songs, and a musical comedy in three scenes for piano and voices. All these he wrote out with the greatest care and precision, adding the date of each, and collecting his pieces into volumes. The more work he did the more neatly he wrote.

Felix as a boy had a wonderful gift for making friends. One day in a street near his home he caught sight of Karl Maria von Weber, the famous composer, who had lately visited the Mendelssohns' house. The boy's dark eyes glowed with pleasure at this chance meeting. He im-



## MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY

---

mediately sprang forward, threw his arms round Weber's neck, and begged him to go home with him at once. The astonished musician, as soon as he had recovered himself, introduced the boy to Julius Benedict, his young friend and pupil, who was walking with him, saying, "This is Felix Mendelssohn."

For response Felix seized the young man's hand in both his own, while Weber stood by smiling at his enthusiasm. Again Felix begged them to accompany him home, but Weber replied that he could not as he had to attend a rehearsal.

"Is it for the opera?" the boy cried excitedly.

"Yes," answered the composer.

"Does *he* know all about it?" asked Felix, pointing to Benedict.

"Indeed he does," answered the composer, laughing; "or if he doesn't he ought to, for he has been bored enough with it already."

The boy's eyes flashed. "Then *you* will come with me to my home, which is quite near, will you not?" he said appealingly.

There was no resisting his entreaty. Felix again embraced Weber and then challenged his new friend to race him to the door of his house. On entering he dragged Benedict upstairs to the drawing-room, exclaiming, "Mamma, Mamma, here is a gentleman, a pupil of Karl Weber, who knows all about the new opera *Der Freischütz*."

The young musician was cordially welcomed, and he was not allowed to leave until he had played on the piano all the airs he could remember from the wonderful new opera which Weber had come to Berlin to superintend.

Benedict was so pleased with his first reception that he came again to the Mendelssohn house, and this time he was surprised to find Felix writing out some music. He

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

could hardly believe his ears when the twelve-year-old boy told him that he was finishing a new quartet for piano and strings—but he did not know Felix Mendelssohn yet.

“And now,” said Felix, laying down his pen, “I will play to you, to prove how grateful I am that you played to us last time.” He then sat down at the piano and played correctly several melodies from *Der Freischütz*. After that they went into the garden, and Felix instantly changed into a rollicking boy, jumping fences, and climbing trees like a squirrel.

Toward the close of this year, 1821, Zelter announced his intention of visiting the aged poet Goethe at Weimar and said that he was willing to take Felix with him. The poet’s house at Weimar was looked upon as a shrine by the elect, and Felix was filled with a reverential awe at the thought of meeting the object of so much hero-worship. Zelter, for his part, felt a certain pride in bringing his favourite pupil to the notice of the great man, although he would never have dreamed of allowing Felix to guess this.

When they arrived at Weimar they found Goethe walking in his garden. He greeted them with kindness and affection, and it was arranged that Felix should play for him the next day—in reality Goethe wished to test for himself the truth of what Zelter had told him about the boy’s unusual talents. He had asked several of his friends to come to hear the young musician, and when the time came to prove him Goethe selected piece after piece of manuscript music from his own collection and asked Felix to play it at sight. The boy did so with ease, to the delight and astonishment of his audience. But they were better pleased still when he began to improvise upon a theme he selected from one of the pieces.

Withholding his praise, Goethe announced that he had

## MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY

---

a final test, and he placed on the music-desk a sheet which seemed to be covered with mere scratches and blotches. The boy laughingly exclaimed: "Who could ever read such writing as that?"

Zelter rose and came to the piano to look at this curiosity. "Why," he declared, "it is Beethoven's writing—one can see that a mile off! He always wrote as if he used a broomstick for a pen, then wiped his sleeve over the wet ink!"

Bit by bit the boy picked out the music from the almost indecipherable manuscript, and when he came to the end he cried, "Now I will play it through for you," promptly doing so without making a single mistake. Goethe was highly delighted, and he begged Felix to come and play to him every day while he remained in the city. The two became fast friends, the old poet treating him like a son, and asking him when they parted to return soon to Weimar, as he would much like to see him again.

In the summer of 1822 the whole of the Mendelssohn family made a tour through Switzerland, much to the delight of Felix, who enjoyed every moment of the holiday. He had little time to work at his compositions, of course, but he wrote a couple of songs and the beginning of a pianoforte quartet, inspired by the view of Lake Geneva and its exquisite surroundings.

When Felix returned to Berlin he had grown much, physically as well as mentally. He was now tall and strong, his curling locks had been clipped, and he seemed suddenly to have grown almost to manhood. His boyish, happy spirits, however, had not changed in the least.

About this time the family removed from their home on the Neue Promenade to a larger and more stately mansion, 3 Leipzigerstrasse, near Potsdam Gate. As those who know the modern city realize, this house is no

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

longer a private residence, and it stands in the very heart of the business world, but in those days the Leipzigerstrasse was on the outskirts of the old town. The rooms of the new home were large and elegant, with a spacious *salon* suitable for musical receptions and other important functions. Belonging to the house was a fine park, with lawns shaded by forest trees, paths that wound in and out between flowering shrubs, and shady nooks that offered quiet retreats. Best of all, there was an enormous summer-house with a central hall which had long windows and glass doors looking out upon the trees and flowers, and which would seat several hundred people. Sunday concerts were often given here now, and on weekdays the young people would meet in this garden-house to discourse music, to act, and generally amuse themselves. The mansion became famous for its hospitality, and every great musician of the time found his way here to pay his respects to and become acquainted with the art-loving family.

On Felix's fifteenth birthday, at a family party given in his honour, his teacher Zelter saluted him as being no longer an apprentice but an 'assistant' and Member of the Brotherhood of Art. Very soon after this the young composer completed two important works. The first of these was an octet for strings, which he finished in 1825, a piece of work which was pronounced to be the most original he had yet accomplished. It marked a distinct stage in the gifted youth's development.

The second important work was the music for the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Through a German translation Felix and Fanny had lately made the acquaintance of Shakespeare and had been particularly fascinated by this dainty play. As they spent much of their time that summer in their wonderful garden it was amid appropriately beautiful surroundings that Felix composed his



## MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY

---

fresh and delicate music. He first brought out the Overture, and when this had been written out he and Fanny often used to play it as a duet—it was in this form that the composer-pianist Moscheles heard it and was impressed by its beauty. Then followed the fascinating Scherzo and the dreamy Nocturne. When the complete work had been elaborated and perfected it was performed by the garden-house orchestra before a crowded audience, which expressed an enthusiastic delight. Sir G. Macfarren has said of it: “No one musical work contains so many points of harmony and orchestration that are novel, yet none of them has the air of experiment, but all seem to have been written with a certainty of their success.”

And now Mendelssohn began to exercise himself with a great project which had been forming in his mind for some time: this was nothing less than to arouse the people of Germany to know and appreciate the great works of Johann Sebastian Bach. His old teacher Zelter was a devoted admirer of Bach and had brought up his pupil to revere him also. Felix had some time before been presented with a manuscript score of Bach's *Passion according to St Matthew*, which Zelter had allowed some one to copy from the original preserved in the Singakademie, and when Felix had found himself in possession of this book he set to work to master it until he knew every bit of it by heart. The more deeply he studied it the more greatly impressed he was with its beauty and sublimity. He could hardly believe that this great work was unknown throughout Germany, written as it had been over one hundred years earlier, and he determined to rouse the people from their apathy.

Felix lost no time in talking the matter over with some of his musical friends, and he began to interest them in his plan for studying the music of the *Passion*. Soon he had secured sixteen good voices, who rehearsed at his



## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

home once a week. His enthusiasm fired them to study the music seriously, and before very long they were anxious to give a public performance.

Now at the Singakademie there was a splendid choir of nearly four hundred voices, conducted by Zelter. If only he would lend his chorus to give a trial performance, thought the enthusiasts, with Mendelssohn to conduct it, how splendid that would be! But Felix knew that it was hopeless to ask this favour of Zelter, as the old master had no faith in the public taking any interest in Bach. But Devrient, one of the little band of singers, insisted that Zelter should be approached on the subject, and as he had himself been one of his pupils he persuaded Mendelssohn to accompany him to the director's house.

Zelter was found seated at his instrument, enveloped in a cloud of smoke issuing from his long-stemmed pipe. Devrient unfolded their plan to him, and the old man listened with growing impatience, until finally he became quite annoyed, rose from his chair, and paced the floor with great strides, exclaiming: "No, it is not to be thought of—it is a mad scheme." Felix beckoned his friend to come away, believing their quest to be hopeless, but Devrient refused to move and kept on with his persuasive arguments. Finally, as though a miracle had taken place, Zelter began to weaken, and at last he gave in completely, promising to give all the help in his power.

How this youth, not yet twenty, undertook the great task of preparing this masterpiece, and the result he achieved, is little short of marvellous. A public performance, conducted by Mendelssohn, took place on March 11, 1829, when every ticket was sold and more than a thousand persons were turned away from the doors. A second performance was given on March 21, the anniversary of Bach's birth, before a crowded house. These performances marked the beginning of a great

## MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY

---

Bach revival in Germany and England, and the love for this music has never been lost since—indeed, it increases from year to year.

Having achieved this great ambition, Mendelssohn felt that he would like to carry out his long-desired visit to England. The present seemed to be a favourable time as his friends there had assured him of a warm welcome. The musical public gave him an enthusiastic greeting when he reached London, and on his first appearance at a Philharmonic concert on May 25, 1829, the audience showed intense appreciation of his work. The day after the concert he wrote to Fanny :

“The success last night was beyond all I had ever dreamed. It began with my Symphony in C Minor. I was led to the desk and received immense applause. The Adagio was encored, but I went on; the Scherzo was so vigorously applauded that I had to repeat it. After the Finale there was a great deal more applause, while I was thanking the orchestra and shaking hands till I left the platform.”

The young composer's time was now fully occupied with a continual round of functions interspersed with concerts at which he played or conducted. The Overture to the *Midsummer Night's Dream* was played several times, and was always received with enthusiasm. On one occasion a friend of his was so careless as to leave the manuscript in a hackney-coach on his way home, and it was lost. “Never mind, I will write another,” said Mendelssohn, and he did so without omissions or errors of any kind.

At the end of the London season Mendelssohn visited Scotland with his friend Klingemann, and was deeply impressed with the varied beauty of the scenery. Perhaps the Hebrides with their lonely grandeur enthralled him most, and in the Overture to *Fingal's Cave* he has given

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

us a glimpse of his emotions. From the whole tour he gained inspiration for the *Scottish Symphony*.

On his return to London, and before he could set out for Berlin, he was unfortunate enough to injure his knee so seriously that he was unable to move for some weeks. This prevented him from being present at the marriage of his sister Fanny to William Hensel, the painter, and keenly disappointed the devoted Mendelssohn family. But Fanny was not to be separated from her people, for on Mendelssohn's return to his home he found that the young couple had taken up their residence in the Gartenhaus.

Mendelssohn had been greatly pleased with his visit to London and felt that he would like to repeat it, but he had only begun the grand tour he had planned, and he decided that he must visit other countries before he came back to London. In May 1830 he went south, bound for Vienna, Florence, and Rome. His way led through Weimar and gave him an opportunity for a last visit to Goethe. The poet and the composer passed several days in a sympathetic companionship, for Goethe always loved to hear good music—he did not, however, care for Beethoven's works greatly, saying that they did not touch him at all, though he felt that they were truly magnificent.

After he had visited numerous German cities Mendelssohn reached Switzerland, and its wonderful scenery stirred his poetic soul to its depths. Yet, despite his passionate love of nature as expressed in mountains, forests, lakes, and waterfalls, it was the sea that he loved best of all. As he approached Naples and saw the water sparkling in the sunlit bay, he exclaimed: "To me it is the finest object in nature. I love it almost more than the sky. I always feel happy when I see before me the wide expanse of water."

Rome, of course, was a centre of fascination for him,

## MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY

---

and every day he chose a different object of interest to visit, thus making memorable each particular day. The tour lasted until the spring of 1832, when he returned to Berlin for a short time. Then once more he set out for London—for this great city, in spite of its fogs, noise, and turmoil, appealed to him more than sunny Naples, fascinating Florence, or Rome.

It has been commented on Mendelssohn that "he lived for years where others lived only for weeks," so fully occupied was every moment of his time. It is thus possible to touch only on his activities in composition, for he was always at work. In May 1836, when he was twenty-seven, he conducted the first performance of his oratorio of *St Paul* in Düsseldorf. At this period also he wrote many of those charming pianoforte pieces which he called *Lieder ohne Worte* (Songs without Words).

In the same year Mendelssohn was made deeply happy by his engagement to Cécile Jean-Renaud, the beautiful daughter of a French Protestant clergyman. In the following spring they were married, and their ten years of subsequent married life were filled with love and steadfast devotion to one another.

The greatest work of Mendelssohn's life was his oratorio of *Elijah*. It had long been maturing in his mind before it was finally completed in the spring of 1846. When he had finished it he wrote to the famous singer Jenny Lind, who was an intimate friend of his: "I cannot contain myself for joy. If my work turns out half as good as I fancy it is, how pleased I shall be!"

During the years in which he conceived the *Elijah* Mendelssohn's fame had spread far and wide. Many honours had been showered upon him by crowned heads; the King of Saxony made him Kapellmeister at his Court, and Queen Victoria showed him many proofs of her personal regard. He was unceasing in his labours



to advance art in every direction, and the since famous Leipzig Conservatorium was founded by the composer. He also found time to arrange for the erection of a monument to the memory of Sebastian Bach at the threshold of the Thomasschule in Leipzig.

On the morning of August 26, 1846, the town hall of Birmingham was filled with an expectant throng awaiting the performance of *Elijah*, which the composer was to conduct for the first time before an English audience. When Mendelssohn stepped upon the platform he was greeted by a deafening shout; the reception was overwhelming, and at the close the entire audience sprang to its feet in a frenzy of admiration. Late that evening Felix wrote to his younger brother Paul: "No work of mine ever went so admirably at the first performance, or was received with such enthusiasm both by musicians and public." In the April of the following year four performances of the oratorio took place in Exeter Hall, the composer conducting, and on the second occasion Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort were both present.

This last visit of Mendelssohn's to England had used his strength to the limit of its endurance, and there was a shadow of an impending breakdown upon him. Soon after he rejoined his family in Frankfort his sister Fanny died suddenly in Berlin. The news was broken to him abruptly, and the shock caused him to fall unconscious upon the floor. He never fully recovered from the effects of this loss, though, for a while, he still composed at intervals. His own death occurred within six months of Fanny's, on November 4, 1847. Of him it can truthfully be said that in his life "there was nothing to tell that was not honourable to his memory and profitable to all men."

Mendelssohn's funeral was imposing, the first portion being solemnized at Leipzig, the second at Berlin. In



## MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY

---

Leipzig the service was attended by crowds of musicians and students, one of the latter bearing on a cushion a silver crown presented by his pupils of the Conservatorium, and beside it the order *Pour le Mérite* conferred upon Mendelssohn by the King of Prussia. During the long procession the orchestra played the E minor song from the *Lieder ohne Worte*, and at the close of the service the choir sang the final chorus from Bach's *Passion*.

The same night the body was taken to Berlin and placed beside that of his sister Fanny in the family plot in the old Dreifaltigkeit Kirchhof.

## XI

### ROBERT SCHUMANN

(1810-56)

MANY of the great composers whose life-stories we have just read were brought up in musical surroundings from their earliest years, but Robert Schumann seems to have been an exception. His grandfather was a poor pastor, who intended that his son August should become a merchant and for this purpose put him into a shop in Nonneburg at the age of fifteen. August was refined in his tastes, a lover of books, and even in his boyhood he tried to write poetry. For some time he remained in the shop, but at last the work grew so distasteful to him that he returned to his parents' home and began to take up writing seriously. At last he secured a position in a bookshop in Zeitz, and soon afterward he met and fell in love with his employer's daughter. The girl's father allowed the engagement on condition that August should leave his shop and set up in business for himself. But where was the money to come from, wondered the young suitor? He left the shop, returned home, and in a year and a half he had worked so hard that he had saved one thousand thalers, which was then quite a handsome sum of money.

August now claimed the hand of his chosen love and set up a book business for himself. By dint of unceasing work he quickly built up a flourishing establishment, and he then moved to a more favourable spot, selecting the rich mining town of Zwickau in Saxony.

Here this industrious and honourable man lived



Robert G. Johnson



## SCHUMANN

---

until the end of his life with his attractive, intelligent, but rather narrow and uneducated young wife, and here they brought up their children. Robert, the future composer, was born on June 8, 1810, and was the youngest of the family of four boys and one girl, all of whom he outlived.

Robert was the 'handsome child' of the family and much petted by his mother and a godmother who used often to take him home with her on a visit of several days. The boy soon became a spoilt darling, and his early upbringing was responsible for his extreme susceptibility and even obstinacy in his riper years.

When he was six years of age little Robert was sent to a popular private school, and for the first time he mixed with children of his own age. Here almost immediately he began to betray the symptoms of the indomitable ambition which later helped him to achieve many things. He quickly became the life of all the childish games: if the children played at being soldiers little Robert was always captain, and he was invariably the leader in all sports. He was, however, good-natured and friendly, and his companions willingly yielded to him.

Robert was a good student, but he never showed any particular brilliance in his studies. When he was seven years old he was allowed to take lessons on the piano from an old professor of Zwickau High School, a man who had taught himself how to play, but who had heard very little music. It must have been a very poor kind of instruction that he was able to give, yet all his life Robert remained faithful to his kind old friend.

In spite of this inadequate guidance, music soon kindled the boy's soul, and though he was entirely ignorant of the rules of composition Robert began to try to make melodies for himself. The first of these efforts, a set of little dances, was written during his eighth or



## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

ninth year. He was also very fond of sketching the dispositions of his companions by different figures on the piano, and they were so exact and comical that every one laughed heartily at the easily recognized portraits.

Robert was extremely fond of reading, much to his father's delight, and he early tried his hand at authorship. The father began to hope that his favourite son would develop into a dramatist or a poet, and he was highly pleased with the robber plays which Robert wrote and which the boy staged with the help of his friends and sister and brothers. But later on Robert's increasing love for music put this hope to flight.

In the summer of 1819 August took Robert with him on a visit to Karlsbad, and here the boy heard the great pianist Ignatz Moscheles for the first time. His masterful playing made a great impression on the nine-year-old enthusiast, who now began to wish himself a musician and applied himself to the pianoforte with renewed zeal. He also made such good progress at school that at Easter 1820 he was able to enter the Zwickau Academy.

The boy's love of music grew steadily, and almost every day he would practise duets by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven with a friend of his own age, and he would also play pieces by Weber, Hummel, and Czerny. He was almost wildly happy when his father, in an endeavour to encourage the boy's taste for music, bought a Steck piano for the Schumann home. About this time Robert found by chance the orchestral score of an old Italian overture, and he conceived the bold idea of performing it. He gathered round him all the boys he knew who could perform on any instrument, and set up an amateur orchestra. There were two violins, two flutes, a clarinet, and two horns. Robert who conducted with great fervour, supplied as best he could the other parts on the piano. This effort was a great incentive to all the

boys, and Robert soon began to arrange other things for his little band. When he was in his twelfth year he composed some music for the hundred and fiftieth Psalm.

August Schumann was more and more convinced that Providence had intended his son to become a musician, and he resolved that the boy should have a thorough musical education, despite the mother's disapproval. He wrote to Karl Maria von Weber, who was then living in Dresden, to ask him to accept the boy as a student, but though the composer was willing the plan failed for some unknown reason. The boy was thus left to direct his own musical studies at the very time when he most required an expert guiding hand to help him. He had no rivals in his native town, where he sometimes made his appearance as a pianist, and he constantly endeavoured to win his mother's consent to his following music as his life-work.

When he was in his early teens a great change took place in the lively, fun-loving boy, and he became reflective, silent, and reserved. This state of mind never afterward left him, and as the years passed by he grew more and more reserved in disposition. The death of his father in 1826 stirred the boy's nature to its depths, and about this time he became acquainted with the imaginative works of Jean Paul Richter, which had a lifelong effect on him.

After the death of his father Robert found that he must make his choice of a profession. He had set his heart on following a musical career, of course, but his mother greatly wished him to take up law. Yielding to her desire, he went to Leipzig in March 1828 to prepare for his entrance into the university as a law student. He had first gained her consent that he might study the piano at the same time, and he began to take lessons from Friedrich Wieck. Wieck's little nine-year-old daughter Clara had already begun to show great promise as a pianist, and

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

it was her finished execution and musical culture that inspired Robert to have lessons with her father.

Under his new teacher Robert was obliged for the first time to study a rational system of technique and tone production. He was also expected to learn harmony correctly, but strangely enough he seemed to take no interest in it, even declaring that he thought such knowledge useless. He held to this foolish idea for some time, but at last gave it up when he realized how totally ignorant he was of this branch of art.

The death of Schubert in 1828 filled Robert with profound grief, as he was greatly impressed with the genius of this master, and eagerly studied the solos and duets he had composed for the piano. The young musical friends with whom Robert had become intimate in Leipzig shared his enthusiasm for this king of German song-makers and also desired to widen their knowledge of his works. They even decided to take one representative composition and practise it together until they had perfected their knowledge of it, and their choice fell on the beautiful Trio in B Flat Major (*Op.* 99). After much loving labour their performance was well-nigh perfect, and Schumann arranged to have a musical party when they could play the Trio before their friends and fellow-students as well as his master Wieck.

This musical evening was the forerunner of many others. Weekly meetings were held in Robert's room, where much music was played and discussed. The talk often turned to Bach and his *Well-tempered Clavichord*, to which in those days he gave ardent study.

Naturally, with all his pianoforte practice and meetings with musical friends, Robert found that he had little time left to devote to his legal studies. Yet he still kept up appearances by attending the lectures, and in May 1829 he set off by coach for Heidelberg and the university.

## SCHUMANN

---

Schumann was nineteen when he went to live in Heidelberg and to lead what he called "the life of flowers." He had a good piano in his rooms, and he quickly surrounded himself with a few musical friends who proved kindred spirits. Almost daily they made delightful trips in a one-horse carriage into the suburbs, and for longer journeys they went to Baden-Baden, Worms, Spires, and Mannheim. In the following August and September Robert and two or three chosen companions made a tour through Italy, the young student preparing himself by studying Latin until he was so fluent that he could translate poems from one language to another with great ease. But wherever they toured Robert always carried with him a small 'dumb piano' on which he industriously practised finger exercises even while he was talking to his friends. The next winter he devoted himself to music more than ever, and his skill as a pianist gradually became so well known throughout Heidelberg that he was frequently asked to play in private houses.

Before setting out on the trip to Italy just mentioned Robert felt that some decision must be reached about his music, as it had become the breath of life to him. He wrote to his mother and laid bare his heart to her. "My whole life," he said, "has been a twenty years' struggle between poetry and prose—or, let us say, between music and law. If I follow my own bent it points, as I believe correctly, to music. Write yourself to Wieck at Leipzig and ask him frankly what he thinks of me and my plan. Beg him to answer at once and decisively." The letter was duly sent to Wieck, and he gave his verdict in favour of Robert.

On hearing his decision Robert was wild with joy. He wrote an exuberant letter to Wieck, promising to be most submissive as a piano pupil and saying: "Whole pailfuls of very, very cold theory can do me no harm, and I will



## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

work at it without a murmur. I give myself up wholly to you."

With a heart full of hope young Schumann returned to Leipzig, which he had so gladly left more than a year before. But during the early part of his resumption of lessons under Wieck he felt that he could not be content with the regular study of the piano, but wanted to get ahead faster. For this purpose he invented a device which he thought would advance his technique in a marvellously short time; he fastened his third finger into a machine of his own invention and practised unceasingly with the other four to render them firm and supple. But the result was most distressing, for instead of increasing his skill it made him lose control over the muscles of his right hand. He now practised unremittingly with the left hand and soon gained extraordinary facility with it. Confronted with such difficulties Robert was obliged to give up his piano lessons with Wieck, and they were never resumed. He studied theory with Kupsch, but soon relinquished this also. He was now free to direct his own path in music and to study—and compose.

One of the first pieces he wrote was *Papillons* (Butterflies), published as *Op. 2*, and dedicated to his three sisters-in-law, of whom he was very fond. In the various scenes of *Papillons* there are allusions to persons and places known to the composer, and the whimsical spirit of Jean Paul broods over the whole.

Robert began to realize more and more his lack of thorough theoretical knowledge and applied to Dorn, who stood high in the musical profession in Leipzig, to help him. On his introduction, in spite of his injured hand, he played his *Abegg Variations* (published as *Op. 1*), and Dorn was willing to accept the timid, quiet youth as a pupil. Robert studied with great ardour, from the elements of musical theory to the most involved counterpoint.



## SCHUMANN

---

Thus passed two or three busy years. Part of this time Schumann had a room in the house of his teacher Wieck, and thus he was thrown more or less into the society of Clara Wieck, now a girl of thirteen or fourteen. Later on he moved to a summer residence in Riedelsgarten, where he spent the days in music and the evenings with his friends, and still maintained a close friendship with his teacher and his family.

The year 1833 was the most remarkable of Schumann's life up to this point, and not the least important event in it was the establishment of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. Schumann himself says of this:

"At the close of the year '33 a number of musicians, mostly young, met in Leipzig every evening, apparently by accident at first, but really for the interchange of ideas on all musical subjects. One day the young hot-heads exclaimed: 'Why do we look idly on? Let's combine to make things better.' Thus the new journal for music began.

"The youthful, fresh, and fiery tone of the journal is to be in sharp contrast to the characterless, worn-out Leipzig criticism. The elevation of German taste, the encouragement of young talent, must be our goal. We write not to enrich tradespeople, but to honour artists."

Schumann took up arms in favour of the younger generation of musicians and helped to make the fame of many who are now held in the world's highest esteem. Sometimes, he admits, his ardour carried him too far in recognition of youthful talent, but in the main he was very just in his estimates. It is impossible to forget how his quick commendation aided Brahms.

The young musicians who had founded the paper had formed themselves also into an alliance, which they called the *Davidsbündlerschaft*, an idea derived from David's war with the Philistines. The notion seemed to exist

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

only in the mind of Schumann, as it gave him a chance to write under the names of different characters, such as Florestan and Eusebius, and Meister Raro. By means of Florestan Schumann expressed the powerful, passionate side of his nature, and in Eusebius the mild and dreamy side. He wrote to a friend: "Florestan and Eusebius are my double nature, which I would gladly—like Raro—melt down into one man." As time passed, however, he made less and less use of these fanciful images, until finally they seemed to fade out of his mind altogether.

An important event of 1834 was Schumann's acquaintance with Ernestine von Fricken, who had come from the little town of Asch on the Bohemian border to live with the Wiecks and study to become a pianist. For some time the young composer had serious thoughts of asking her to marry him, but about a year after they had first met his love for her had grown cold.

The noble *Études Symphoniques* were written in 1834, the theme having been suggested by Ernestine's father. The *Carnival* was partly written in this year, but was not completed until 1835. In this collection of charming short pieces Schumann brought in the characters of his dreams—Florestan, Eusebius, Chiarina (Clara), Estrella (Ernestine). The titles of many of the pieces, such as the *March against the Philistines*, are characteristic. The *Carnival* is a true Schumann composition, full of his own traits; much of it is sweet, elegant, and graceful, while the Finale is humorous and comical.

The tone creations of 1835 consist of the two Sonatas, in F sharp minor (*Op.* 11) and in G minor (*Op.* 22), which are held by pianists to be among his most interesting and poetical works.

In 1836 Schumann suffered a deep sorrow in the loss of his mother. In the meantime, however, his affection for Clara Wieck had begun to ripen into a devoted love,

## SCHUMANN

---

although her father had constantly opposed any possibility of their marriage. Schumann wrote to a friend in 1839: "Truly from the struggle Clara has cost me much music has been caused and created. The Concerto, Sonatas, *Davidsbündler Dances*, *Kreisleriana*, and *Novelletten* are the result."

Besides the works he mentioned Schumann relieved his oppressed heart by a composition rich in meaning—nothing less than the great Fantasia (*Op.* 17), containing the three movements of *Ruins*, *Triumphal Arch*, and *Starry Crown*. He had at first intended to contribute the profits from its sale to the fund for the erection of a monument to Beethoven, but he afterward gave up this idea, and the work was dedicated to Franz Liszt.

Schumann led a quiet, busy life, and he would have been supremely happy if he could have gained Wieck's consent to his marriage with his daughter Clara. He believed that his old teacher's refusal was due chiefly to the composer's modest means, and he believed that he would have to make more money before he could claim Clara as his wife. He now began seriously to contemplate returning to Vienna and moving his paper to that city in the hope of bettering his fortunes. He thought, too, that as he had remained in Leipzig for eight years without change it was time that he began to travel once more.

At the end of September 1838 Schumann set out for Vienna with high hopes. He had been invited by a friend to stay at his house, and this was of great advantage to him, for he really learned to know the city well, and he made many visits to musicians and publishers. He soon found, however, that it would not be profitable for him to publish his journal there, and that the Austrian capital was no more propitious to the fortune-seeker than was the smaller town of Leipzig. But during his stay in Vienna he found time to compose a number of works

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

which have since become greatly beloved, such as the *Arabesque* (Op. 18), *Faschingsschwank* (or *Carnival Strains from Vienna*), the *Night Pieces* (Op. 24), and other short compositions.

When Schumann discovered that Vienna was useless for his purpose he decided not to delay his return to Leipzig, but to hasten back and claim his bride. He came back in April, and after some legal proceedings he was able to wed his Clara in 1840. From this time forward he began to write many songs, composing as many as one hundred and thirty-eight in this one year. He wrote at this time that "the best way to cultivate a taste for melody is to write a great deal for the voice and for independent chorus."

He now began to express himself in orchestral music as well as in song, his first effort being the beautiful Symphony in B Flat Major. Many of his best compositions came into being in the early years of his wedded happiness, for Clara proved a most admirable helpmate, shielding him as far as possible from every interruption and annoyance that would hinder his work.

In the January of 1844 Clara planned a long concert tour, and she made her husband promise to accompany her to St Petersburg. He was most unwilling to leave the quiet life he had been leading, but he went with his accomplished wife wherever she desired, from Russia to Helsingfors, Stockholm, and Copenhagen. Clara had great success everywhere as a pianist, and gave a great many recitals before they returned to Leipzig in June.

Schumann seemed to lose interest in his journal about this time, and he expressed a wish to withdraw from it and live only for his creative art. Both physically and mentally his health gave cause for alarm and made this retirement seem desirable. Perhaps it was owing to this that he decided to leave Leipzig for good and make his

## SCHUMANN

---

home in Dresden, and on December 8 he and his wife took a formal leave of their friends at a *matinée musicale*.

But life in Dresden was even more strenuous and rack-ing than it had been in Leipzig. He threw himself with such fervour into the work of composing the epilogue of Goethe's *Faust* that he fell into an intensely nervous state and was unable to compose at all for a time. Special medical treatment restored him to a certain extent, and he was able to resume his labours in a modified form, but he was still far from well. He seemed to live in a constant fear of some impending disaster—death or insanity—and he let many brief remarks to this effect drop from time to time. Mendelssohn's sudden death in November 1847 was a great shock to him and preyed upon his mind. He could never bear to look at the asylum of Sonnenstein near Dresden. In his intervals of reprieve from these morbid dreams he again began to compose with renewed—almost abnormal—vigour and productiveness.

The artist pair visited Vienna in 1847 in order that Clara might give some concerts, and they spent several weeks in this city. Before returning home they gave two splendid concerts in Prague, where Schumann received a perfect ovation for his piano quintet and some songs. A little later they travelled north, and in Berlin Clara gave two recitals, while Schumann conducted a performance of *Paradise and the Peri* at the Singakademie.

Apart from their tours Schumann was very active in other ways during 1847, composing several piano trios, much choral music, and the first part of the opera *Genoveva*. All the compositions were perfectly lucid and sane, but unfortunately the opera had a text from which all the beauty and romance had been left out. The music, however, revealed a rare quality of creative power combined with deep and noble feeling. Schumann's nature was more lyric than dramatic; he was not born to write



## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

for the stage, and the lyric portions of his opera are much the best. But he never realized himself that he failed on the dramatic side of his work.

*Genoveva* was completed in 1848 and performed in June 1850, with the composer himself conducting. After two further performances had been given the work was laid on one side.

In 1848 Schumann, who loved children dearly and often stopped his most serious work to write for them, composed the *Album for the Young* (Op. 68), a set of forty-two pieces. The original title was *Christmas Album for Children who like to play the Piano*—and how many children from that day to this have enjoyed playing those little pieces, *The Merry Peasant*, *The Wild Rider*, *First Loss*, and *The Reaper's Song*? Even the great pianists of our time are not above performing these little classics in public, for they are unique in musical literature and have never been equalled by other writers. Schumann wrote of them: "The first thing in the *Album* I wrote for my eldest child's birthday. It seems as if I were beginning my life as a composer anew, and there are traces of the old disposition here and there. They are decidedly different from *Scenes from Childhood*, which are retrospective glances by a parent and for elders, while the *Album for the Young* contains hopes, views, and peeps into the future for the young."

After the *Album* he wrote the music to Byron's *Manfred*, the work consisting of an overture and fifteen numbers. The overture is one of his finest productions, surpassing other orchestral works in intellectual grandeur, and the numbers with one exception are deep in thought and masterly in conception.

From 1848 to 1849 Schumann was inspired to compose a considerable amount of choral music, as he was the director of a choral club of sixty-seven members.

## SCHUMANN

---

But the intense creative activity of 1849 was followed by a period of rest when he and his wife made two trips early in 1850 to Leipzig, Bremen, and Hamburg. Most of the time in Hamburg was spent with Jenny Lind, who sang at his last two concerts.

In the late summer of 1850 Schumann was appointed director of music in Düsseldorf when Ferdinand Hiller vacated the post to go to Cologne, and in the first week of September he took up his duties there. On his arrival in Düsseldorf he and his wife received an enthusiastic welcome; a banquet was given in their honour, and a concert was arranged at which some of his important works were performed. His duties were not onerous and did not overtax his strength, and he seemed well pleased with them. He had to conduct the subscription concerts, weekly rehearsals of the Choral Club, and other musical performances.

While zealously carrying out his official duties he could not rest from his passion for composition. From November 2 to December 9 he completed the Symphony in E Flat in five parts—a great work, equal to any of the other works in this form.

From this time onward one important composition followed another until increasing ill-health foreshadowed the sad catastrophe of his later days. In June 1851 he wrote: "We are all tolerably well, except that I am the victim of occasional nervous attacks. A few days ago I fainted after hearing Radecke play the organ." In 1852 these nervous attacks became more frequent and alarming. He could not think his music in rapid *tempo*, but must have everything in slow time; he also heard special tones to the exclusion of others.

The latter part of 1853 brought him two joyful happenings: in October he met Johannes Brahms, whom he had introduced to the world through his journal as the

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

“Messiah of Art”; and in November he and his wife made a tour through Holland which resolved itself into a triumphal procession. Schumann found that his music was almost as well known in Holland as at home. In Rotterdam and Utrecht his Third Symphony was performed; at The Hague the Second Symphony and *The Pilgrimage of the Rose*. Clara also played at many concerts.

Immediately before Christmas the artist pair returned to Düsseldorf. The hallucinations which had beset the composer for some time now attacked him with alarming force. He could no longer sleep—he seemed to be lost in mental darkness.

One day in February 1854 his physician called upon him at midday. There were several people in the room, and while they sat there chatting Schumann suddenly rose and went out. The doctor and his friends expected his return at any moment, but in a short time his wife became anxious and went in search of him. It seems that he had left the house in his dressing-gown, walked to the Rhine bridge, and thrown himself into the river. Some sailors who had been watching were able to rescue him.

Schumann was now obliged to receive constant care, and it was found best to place him in a private asylum. He remained in a mental home near Bonn until the end of July 1856, when he obtained a merciful relief from his sufferings.

By the death of Schumann the world lost one of its most gifted musicians. His life was noteworthy not only for the great results he achieved, but also for its moral and intellectual grandeur, and his constant striving after noble and lofty ideals.

## XII

### FRÉDÉRIC-FRANÇOIS CHOPIN

(1810-49)

**W**HAT would the piano-playing world do without the music of Frédéric Chopin? It is almost impossible to think of the piano without also thinking of the composer who wrote almost exclusively for this instrument. His music touches the heart rather than the head, and his emotional message far outweighs the intellectual meaning. His music is always vital, winning the affections by its tenderness, voicing the highest sentiments in its purity and refinement, its perfection of detail and finish.

And, as one cannot avoid expressing oneself in one's work, the man who composed with such appealing eloquence and refinement must have been gentle, chivalrous, and great of soul.

Chopin's father was a Frenchman, born in Nancy, Lorraine, in 1770—the year that Beethoven saw the light in Bonn. He was carefully brought up, well bred and well educated. In those days the tobacco and snuff trade was in high repute with the nobility, and when a friend of his in Warsaw required a new book-keeper he sent for the seventeen-year-old Nicholas. Thus it happened that Chopin's father came to Poland in 1787.

It was a time of unrest, when the Polish nation was struggling for liberty and independence. The young man applied himself to the mastery of the language and studied the character and needs of his adopted country in order that he might be well informed. During this

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

period of insecurity in political affairs the tobacco factory had to be closed, and Nicholas Chopin was obliged to look for another means of earning his livelihood. He became the tutor of Frédéric, son of the Countess Skarbek, and lived as one of the household. Here he met Justina de Krzyzanowska, a young lady of noble but impoverished family, and in 1806 they were married. Justina afterward became the mother of his four children, three girls and a boy.

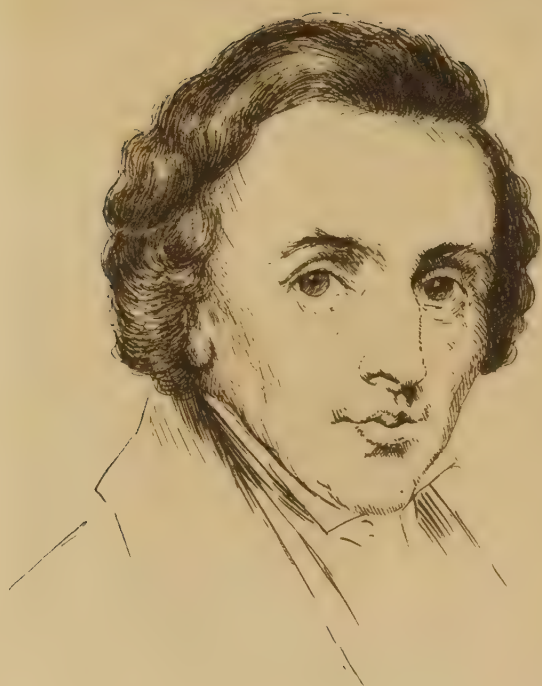
Frédéric-François, the only son of Justina and Nicholas Chopin, was born on March 1, 1810, in the little village of Zelazowa Wola, the property of the Countess Skarbek; it was situated at a distance of about twenty-eight miles from Warsaw.

Nicholas Chopin now began to feel that he must seek some more profitable employment in order to provide for his increasing family, and applied for the post of professor of French in the newly founded Lyceum in Warsaw. The application was successful, and he received his appointment on October 1, 1810. He also organized a boarding-school in his own house, and this was patronized by the best Polish families of the country.

Little Frédéric thus passed a fortunate childhood, for he was surrounded by refined and cultured people in an atmosphere at once moral and intellectual. He soon manifested such fondness for music, and especially the piano, that his parents allowed him to have lessons from Adalbert Zywny, the best-known master of the city.

Very early he began to give definite signs of his extraordinary talents. Before he was eight years old he played at a large evening party with such surprising cleverness that it was predicted that he would become a second Mozart. The next year he was invited to take part in an important concert given under distinguished patronage. He was a simple, modest child, and he played the piano





*J. Chopin*



## CHOPIN

---

with as little conscious art as a bird that is singing. When he returned home after the concert his mother asked him : "What did the people like best?" and he answered naïvely : "Oh, Mamma, every one was looking at my collar!"

After this performance Frédéric was the pet of the aristocracy of Warsaw. His charming manners and unspoiled nature, added to his real gift for music, made him welcome in princely homes. He had already begun to compose, his early efforts being made soon after he first had pianoforte lessons and before he could hold a pen. His teacher had in those early days to write down in notes what the little composer played—such as mazurkas, polonaises, and walses. At the age of ten he dedicated a march to the Grand Duke Constantine, who was so highly delighted with it that he had it orchestrated and played on parade. Frédéric now began to take lessons in composition with a celebrated teacher, Joseph Elsner, who was from that time a lifelong friend and adviser. Zywny, it is said, taught the child the first principles of music only, as his progress was so extraordinary that he had soon mastered all his teacher could impart, and at twelve he was left to shape his own musical destiny.

Frédéric received all his first ordinary education in his father's boarding-school at home, but at the age of fifteen he entered the Warsaw Lyceum. He proved himself to be quite a good student, twice carrying off a prize. To this studiousness he joined a gaiety and sprightliness that manifested itself in all sorts of fun and mischief. He loved to play pranks on his sisters and his friends, and he was fond of caricaturing people round him with his pencil and by imitating their actions. Indeed, it was the opinion of a clever actor of the time that the boy was destined to make his name on the stage. Frédéric and his three sisters had all a great fondness for literature, occasionally

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

writing verse and producing original one-act plays for family parties and birthday fêtes.

In 1825, when in his sixteenth year, Frédéric published his first composition for the piano, a Rondo in C Minor (*Op.* 1), and followed it up quickly by a set of Variations (*Op.* 2) on an air from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. These early pieces, which were probably written before he was fifteen, already gave the first signs of his characteristic style. Even at this stage he was pleased with chords that had the tones in extended harmony. As his hands were small he invented a contrivance which separated the fingers as far apart as possible, in order that he might reach the new chords more easily. Although he wore it even at night it did not result in any injury to his hands as Schumann's invention had done to his in his efforts to strengthen his fingers.

In 1827 Chopin finished his studies at the Lyceum and determined to adopt music as his profession. He was now seventeen, of slender figure, finely cut features, high forehead, and delicate brows above dreamy and soulful eyes. Though he was not weak or sickly, as some of his biographers imply, he was never very robust; he was somewhat lethargic, and preferred to lie under the trees on a sunny day indulging in day-dreams to taking long excursions afoot. In his early youth he was reasonably healthy, though he was not of a hardy constitution and he required a considerable amount of maternal care in his upbringing. He was, however, vivacious, active in his movements, and hard-working at music. One of his great aversions was the use of tobacco in any form.

Young Chopin greatly wished to travel and see something of the world, and an opportunity to visit Berlin came to him in 1828. He was invited to accompany an old friend of his father's, Dr Jarocki, Professor of the Warsaw University, when he went to Berlin to attend a

## CHOPIN

---

Philosophic Congress presided over by Alexander von Humboldt. Frédéric was beside himself with joy, for he believed that now he would meet some of the musical celebrities of the German capital and hear some wonderful compositions.

Arrived in Berlin he declined to attend the meetings of the Congress, but spent his time in inspecting music-shops and piano factories, and in attending concerts whenever possible. But he never met any of the musicians of whom he had dreamed, although he occasionally gazed at them from a distance. Possibly his modesty and reticence kept him from intruding himself as a young composer, for he wrote home about a concert in the Singakademie: "Spontini, Zelter, and Felix Mendelssohn were all there, but I spoke to none of these gentlemen, as I did not think it becoming to introduce myself."

After a stay of two weeks in the Prussian capital Professor Jarocki and Frédéric set out on their return journey to Poland. While on their way they were at one time obliged to wait for an hour at an inn until fresh horses could be obtained, and Frédéric began to look about for something to do to while away the waiting-time. He soon discovered, in a corner, an old piano, which proved to be in tune, and he immediately sat down and began to improvise on Polish melodies. Soon his fellow-passengers of the stage-coach began to drop in one after the other, and at last even the postmaster with his wife and pretty daughter came to hear the young composer. The hour thus soon passed away and fresh horses had been put in the coach, but the passengers begged him to continue his playing. He protested that it was now time to continue their journey, but they insisted that he should remain at the piano. Afterward wine was brought in and they all drank the health of the young master. Chopin then gave them a mazurka for farewell, and after this



## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

the tall postmaster caught him up in his arms and carried him to the coach, and all the travellers set off again in high spirits.

"At the time of the Berlin visit," writes Niecks, his biographer, "Chopin was a lively, well-educated, well-mannered youth, who walked through life pleased with its motley garb, but as yet unconscious of the deeper truths, the immensities of joy and sadness, of love and hate, which lie beneath the surface."

In the days when Chopin lived musicians who wished to make themselves known had to travel about the world, arranging concerts here and there, and introducing themselves to prominent citizens in each place in order to acquaint them with their gifts. About the middle of July 1829 Chopin set out for Vienna for this purpose with three young friends.

Naturally the young musician carried many letters of introduction with him, both to publishers and to influential people, to whom he played. On all sides he was told that it was his duty to give a concert, and that it would be a disgrace to his parents, teachers, and himself if he would not appear in public. At last Frédéric overcame his hesitation, and in a letter home he wrote: "I have made up my mind; they tell me I shall create a *furor*, that I am an artist of the first rank, worthy of a place beside Moscheles, Herz, and Kalkbrenner"—all three well-known musicians of the day. One must forgive the nineteen-year-old boy if he felt a certain amount of pride in being classed with these older and more famous musicians.

Chopin's concert took place in the Imperial Opera House ten days after his arrival and was an unqualified success. Chopin was overcome with delight. A second concert was called for the second week and proved equally popular. At both he played some of his own compositions

## CHOPIN

---

and improvised as well. "It goes *crescendo* with my popularity here, and this gives me much pleasure," he wrote home at the end of a fortnight, when on the eve of his return. On the way back the travellers visited Prague, Teplitz, and Dresden, spending a couple of days in each town.

With such an intense nature as Chopin's, friendship and love were two vital forces controlling life and action. He was devoted to his friends and clung to them with an effusive ardour incomprehensible to those less sensitive and romantic. His most intimate friend was Titus Woyciechowski, to whom he wrote most affectionate letters when they chanced to be separated. Titus was less demonstrative, but he remained a faithful friend throughout his life.

Love for women was destined to play an important part in the inner life of Chopin. His first awakening came when he fell in love with Constantia Gladowska, a beautiful girl who was studying singing at the School of Music in Warsaw. He filled his thoughts with her by day and confessed to dreaming about her at night. When she made her *début* in opera he hung on every note she sang and greatly rejoiced in her success, but he did not make his feelings known to her. He admired her for a long time at a distance, but, if report speaks true, he never really declared his love to her. He confined his pent-up emotions to his piano instead, and found an outlet in impassioned improvisations.

Chopin realized now that in Warsaw there was no suitable field for his genius and that he ought to leave home in order to make a name for himself. But he continued to put off the evil day that would separate him from his beloved Constantia, from his home, and his friends. The two years of indecision were fruitful, however, in the production of much music for the piano.

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

When Chopin had completed his beautiful Concerto in E Minor he rehearsed it with an orchestra, and it was arranged that it should be performed on October 11, 1830. This was the third and last concert he ever gave in Warsaw. At this concert Constantia Gladowska, whom he had not yet met, sang an aria at his special request, and this gave him intense pleasure. He wrote to his friend that "Mademoiselle Gladowska wore a white gown with roses in her hair and was wondrously beautiful; she has never sung so well."

Immediately after this Chopin decided that it was time he went in search of fortune. His trunk was bought, his clothing ready, his pocket-handkerchiefs hemmed—nothing now remained but the worst difficulty of all, the leave-taking.

On November 1, 1830, Elsner and a number of other friends accompanied him to Wola, the first village beyond Warsaw. There they were met by a group of students from the Warsaw School of Music, who sang a cantata composed by Elsner for the occasion. A banquet followed, and during the meal a silver goblet filled with Polish earth was presented to Chopin in the name of them all. Chopin was greatly moved and declared: "I am convinced that I am saying an eternal farewell to my native country. I have a presentiment that I shall never return." And so indeed it proved.

By way of Breslau, Dresden, and Prague Chopin now made his way to Vienna. But in the great city where he had formerly been a great success everything was not so rosy for him now. Haslinger was unwilling to publish more of his compositions, though there were the two Concertos, Études, and many short pieces. He had no opportunity to give a concert. He was lonely and unhappy, constantly dreaming of his home and the much-loved Constantia.

## CHOPIN

---

From graphic letters to one of his friends a few sentences reveal his inner life at this distressing period: "To-day is the first of January [1831]. Oh, how sadly this year begins for me! I love you all above all things. My poor parents! How are my friends faring? I could die for you all. Why am I doomed to be here so lonely and forsaken? You can at least open your hearts to each other. Go and see my parents—and—Constantia."

Despite his disappointments in Vienna, Chopin made many pleasant acquaintances among the musicians and prominent people of that city, and received many invitations to their homes. He planned to make a journey to Italy, but he refrained because of the political troubles of that country at the time, and set out for Paris instead. He stopped at a few places on the way, and in Munich the concert which he gave at the Philharmonic Hall won him renown. He then proceeded to Stuttgart, and during his short stay there heard the sad news of the taking of Warsaw by the Russians. This is said to have inspired him to compose the *Étude in C Minor* (*Op.* 10, No. 12).

When Chopin arrived in Paris the Poles and everything Polish were the fashion in that capital, and on this account he found ready entrance into the highest and most literary circles. The atmosphere in which he lived was in harmony with his sensitive and romantic temperament, and it is little wonder that he gained much inspiration from his contact with some of the greatest people in the world of art and letters of the time. Among these were Victor Hugo, king of the romanticists, Heine, the poet and novelist, as well as De Musset, Flaubert, Zola, Lamartine, Chateaubriand, Baudelaire, Ary Scheffer, Mérimée, Gautier, Berlioz, Balzac, Rossini, Meyerbeer, Hiller, Nourrit, and George Sand.

Chopin also met in Paris Liszt, Mendelssohn, and Kalkbrenner. The last-named was considered to be the

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

first pianist of the day, and on one occasion Chopin was invited to play before him in his house. Kalkbrenner remarked that he had the style of Cramer and the touch of Field. He was impressed with the young musician, and suggested that he should study under him for three years, when he would become a great *virtuoso*. But Chopin's old friend and teacher dissuaded him from doing this, as he said that by his teaching Chopin might learn something on the mechanical side, but he would assuredly run the risk of injuring his originality and style.

During his first year in Paris the composer played at a number of concerts and society functions with much success—but it was an artistic rather than a financial success. He was meditating a tour in America one day when he chanced to meet Prince Radziwill in the street, and was persuaded to play at the Rothschild mansion that evening. From that time his prospects brightened, and he secured a number of wealthy patrons as pupils. He was as great a favourite in the aristocratic as in the artistic world, and his compositions were now dedicated to various princesses, countesses, and other titled personages. His music, too, was greatly influenced by his surroundings.

During the season of 1833 to 1834 Chopin continued to make great headway as composer, pianist, and teacher. A letter to friends in Poland states that "Frédéric looks well and strong, turning the heads of all the Frenchwomen and making the men jealous. He is now the fashion."

In the spring of 1834 Ferdinand Hiller begged Chopin to accompany him to Aix-la-Chapelle, to attend the Lower Rhine Musical Festival, but the composer found he had not enough money, as he had either spent it or impoverished himself by giving to a needy countryman. In this dilemma he went to Pleyel, the publisher, with the



## CHOPIN

---

manuscript of his Valse in E Flat (*Op.* 18). Pleyel gave him five hundred francs for the composition, and the two musicians were thus enabled to set out on the trip they had planned and to enjoy it thoroughly.

In July 1835 Chopin met his parents in Karlsbad, where his father had been ordered to take the cure by the Warsaw physicians. The reunion was an extremely happy one, as they had not met for five years and in that time the young man had become famous.

After this Chopin proceeded to Dresden and Leipzig, meeting Schumann for the first time in the latter town. Schumann greatly admired the young Pole and wrote much about him in his musical journal. Mendelssohn, who was also in Leipzig at the time, considered Chopin as "a really perfect *virtuoso*, whose piano playing was both original and masterly"—but he was not quite decided whether his compositions were right or wrong. Chopin also stayed in Heidelberg for a short time, visiting the father of his pupil Adolph Gutmann. He must have been back in Paris about the middle of October, for the papers of that date mention that "M. Chopin, one of the most eminent pianists of our epoch, has just made a tour of Germany which has been for him a real ovation. Everywhere his admirable talent obtained the most flattering reception and excited much enthusiasm."

The story of Chopin's attraction for Marie Wodzinski is soon told. During his visit to Dresden in 1835 he saw a great deal of his old friends, Count Wodzinski and his family. The daughter, Marie, aged nineteen, was tall and slender, charming without being beautiful, with soft dark hair and expressive eyes. Chopin spent every evening of his short stay at their home: on the last occasion Marie gave him a rose, and he composed a valse for her. In the following summer they met again at Muriénbad, resumed their walks, talks, and music, and

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

Marie drew a portrait of the young musician. One day Chopin proposed, and Marie refused him, assuring him that she would always remain his friend, but declaring definitely that her family would never consent to a match between them. So their brief romance was ended.

An attachment of a different sort was that with Madame Dudevant, better known in literature as George Sand. This remarkable woman had spent her childhood in the village of Nohant, married and brought up her children, Maurice and Solange, there, when suddenly she decided that she would like to see more of life and that Paris would give her what she wanted. She therefore arranged, in 1831, to spend six months of every year in Paris, and though she had ample means she intended to live on two hundred and fifty francs a month. Her *ménage* was of the simplest—three small rooms, with meals from a restaurant close by at two francs, and she herself did the washing. Woman's attire she found too expensive, and as she had dressed like a man in Nohant when riding or hunting she saw nothing shocking in doing this in Paris also.

And now began for her what she termed her literary student life. She walked about the streets in all weathers, at all times, visiting garrets, studios, clubs, theatres, coffee-houses, and all places where people congregate except the *salons*. She was profoundly interested in the romance of social life as lived in the French capital, and from the studies of life she made there she produced several novels during the years that followed 1831.

It is said that Chopin met Madame Sand at a *matinée musicale* given by some marquis, at which had assembled all the genius, beauty, and wealth of the aristocracy. Chopin was absorbed in one of his improvisations on the piano when he chanced to lift his eyes from the keys and encountered the fiery glances of a lady standing near.

## CHOPIN

---

Perhaps a truer account of their first meeting is that given by Chopin's pupil Gutmann. Madame Sand, who had the faculty of subjugating every man of genius with whom she came in contact, repeatedly asked Liszt for an introduction to the composer. One morning, therefore, when Liszt had found his brother-artist in good spirits over a new composition, he asked him to play it to some of his friends, and arranged for a party that evening when he should come with George Sand and his own great friend, Madame d'Agoult. This meeting took place in 1837, and many others followed; in his *Life of Chopin* Liszt describes one in poetical terms.

At first the fastidious musician was by no means attracted to the rather masculine-looking woman, who was short, stout, with a large nose, coarse mouth, and small chin, and much addicted to smoking. But she had wonderful eyes, and her manners were quiet and fascinating, and Chopin soon fell under her sway. George Sand liked to master a reserved, artistic nature such as that of the Polish musician, though she was not musical herself, and soon the two were seen together everywhere.

In 1838 Madame Sand's son Maurice fell ill, and she proposed a trip to Majorca. Chopin accompanied the party, and the bad weather and other discomforts of the journey told on his health. When he returned to Paris his friends became very anxious on his account, and he had to take great care of himself. During the season he gave fewer lessons, and in the holidays he spent his time at Nohant, where he amused himself with the Sand children, of whom he was very fond. He played very rarely now in public, though he gave two concerts at Pleyel's rooms in 1841 and 1842.

From 1843 to 1847 Chopin lived a quiet and apparently happy life, broken by the sorrows of his bereavements in 1844, when his father and one sister died of

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

pulmonary trouble. Then, in 1847, his great friendship for George Sand came to an abrupt end, though it had been threatening for some time, and the composer found himself ill and alone in Paris. Of his inevitable breach with George Sand he never had very much to say, though she said a great deal and even made him the hero of one of her novels; his students asserted that she had been the cause of his death. Probably her treatment of him helped to undermine the master's health, and though he had long wearied of her before they parted her loss came as a blow to him.

Chopin gave his last concert in Paris on February 16, 1848. Though he was weak and ill he played beautifully—but at the end it is said that he fainted in the artists' room.

To secure rest and change he undertook a journey to London for the second time, arriving on what was to be his last visit on April 21, 1848. The composer played at different great people's houses and gave two *matinées* at the homes of Adelaide Kemble and Lord Falmouth on June 23 and July 7 respectively. These were attended by many titled people, and Viardot Garcia took the vocal parts. The composer was thin and pale, and played "with wasted fingers," but his music brought him great applause and the money he obtained helped to replenish his depleted purse.

In August of the same year Chopin visited Scotland and stayed with his pupil Miss Jane Stirling, to whom he dedicated the two Nocturnes (*Op.* 55). On August 28 he made his appearance in Manchester, but his playing was rather weak, although it retained all its elegance, finish, and grace. He was encored for his familiar Mazurka (*Op.* 7, No. 1), and repeated it with quite different *nuances*. In a letter to a friend a member of this audience wrote: "My emotion was so great that I was compelled

## CHOPIN

---

to retire to recover myself. I have heard all the celebrated stars of the musical firmament, but never one has left such an impression on my mind."

Chopin returned to London in November, and left England in January 1849. His finances were very low indeed, but the help of kind friends made his last days pass in comfort. A Russian countess paid half the cost of his lodgings in the Rue Chaillot, Paris, without his having any knowledge of her generosity, and the generous-hearted Miss Stirling raised a sum of twenty-five thousand francs on his behalf. On October 17, 1849, he passed peacefully away.

Chopin's friends filled his death-chamber with blossoms, and Liszt tells us that his face looked beautiful and young in the flower-covered casket. The funeral took place on October 30, from the Madeleine, Lefébure-Wély playing the Preludes in E and B Minor; afterward the Funeral March in B Flat Minor as orchestrated by Reber was given. His body was then laid to rest in the great cemetery of Père Lachaise.

Chopin was pre-eminently a composer for the piano-forte. With the exception of the Trio (*Op.* 8) and a book of Polish songs, everything he wrote was for his favourite instrument. There are seventy-two numbers in the list of his works, but often one *opus* number contains a whole set of pieces—in the *Études*, for example, *Op.* 10 contains twelve pieces, as does *Op.* 25. These *Études* include every phase of piano technique; each one has a definite aim, yet each one is as music a beautiful finished work. The greatest masters have taken pride in editing and re-editing them.

The twenty-four Preludes composed by Chopin were written before he went to Majorca, though they were perfected and polished while he was there. Written early in his career, they have a youthful vigour not often found



## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

in his later works. "Much in miniature are these Preludes of the Polish poet," says Huneker.

Chopin composed four Impromptus, and the same number of Ballades and Scherzos. In them he is free, fascinating, and often bold and daring. The great Fantasia (*Op.* 49) is an epic poem, while the Barcarolle is a love-poem. The two Sonatas, with an early effort in this form, are among the modern classics in music and appear on the programmes of most of the great pianists of the day. The two Concertos are cherished by performers and audience alike and never fail to make an instant and lasting appeal. Chopin wrote also eleven Polonaises, those courtly dances which are the most characteristic and national of his works; fourteen Valses, beloved of every student the world over; eighteen Nocturnes of gentle, starry-night music; and fifty-two entrancing Mazurkas.

In looking over the list of his works one marvels that the composer, who lived such a busy and supersensitive life, his days occupied with giving many pianoforte lessons, should ever have had the time to create such a mass of music—or that he should ever have had the energy to write it. When one considers its beauty, originality, and grace one must surely acknowledge Frédéric Chopin to be one of the greatest of pianoforte geniuses of all time.

### XIII

## HECTOR BERLIOZ

(1803-69)

**L**A CÔTE-SAINT-ANDRÉ is a romantic spot in the south of France, near Grenoble. It lies on a hillside overlooking a wide green and golden plain, and its dreamy majesty is accentuated by the line of mountains that bound it on the south-east. These in turn are crowned by the distant glory of snowy peaks and Alpine glaciers. In this beautiful place was born on December 11, 1803, Hector Berlioz, one of the most distinguished men of the modern movement in French musical art.

Hector was the only son of a learned physician. When the little boy was old enough to begin his studies Dr Berlioz himself taught him thoroughly the rudiments of history, geography, literature, languages, and even music. Hector was a most impressionable and romantic child, who peopled nature with fairies and elves as he lay under great trees and dreamed fantastic daydreams. Poetry and tales of imagination were his delight, and he found much to browse upon in his father's large library.

Hector's grandfather on his mother's side lived at Meylan, a little village not far from Grenoble, and in this picturesque valley the family used to spend a part of each summer. In a crevice of the mountain above Meylan stood a white house amid its vineyards and gardens, where lived Madame Gautier and her two nieces. When Hector saw the younger of the two nieces for the first time he was a shy, retiring little fellow of twelve, while Estelle

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

was eighteen, tall, graceful, with beautiful dusky hair and expressive eyes. She was wearing at the time a simple white gown and a pair of pink slippers, and the small boy fell desperately in love with this wonderful apparition. As he himself recorded later :

“ Never do I recall Estelle but with the flash of her large dark eyes comes the twinkle of her dainty pink shoes. To say I loved her comprises everything. I was wretched, dumb, despairing. By night I suffered agonies —by day I wandered alone through the fields of Indian corn or, like a wounded bird, sought the deepest recesses of my grandfather’s orchard.

“ One evening there was a party at Madame Gautier’s, and various games were played. In one of them I was told to choose first. But I dared not, my heart-beats choked me. Estelle, smiling, caught my hand, saying, ‘ Come, I will begin ; I choose Monsieur Hector.’ But ah, she laughed !

“ I was thirteen when we parted. I was thirty when, returning from Italy, I passed through this district so full of early memories. My eyes filled at sight of the white house ; I loved her still. On reaching my old home I learned that she was married ! ”

When Hector was about twelve he made his first attempts at musical composition. His father gave him a flute, and on this he worked so industriously that in seven or eight months he could play fairly well ; he was also given singing lessons, as he had a pleasing soprano voice. The ambitious boy likewise taught himself harmony from a copy of Rameau’s work on the subject which he had found in a pile of old books, and he spent many hours poring over those laboured theories in his efforts to reduce them to some form and sense. Inspired by all these studies, he made some arrangements of trios and quartets, and finally he was emboldened to write a quintet for flute,

## BERLIOZ

---

two violins, viola, and 'cello. Two months later he had produced another quintet, which proved to be a little better.

Hector's father had set his heart upon his son's following his own profession, and when the boy was twelve and a half he felt that it was almost time he began his medical studies. He promised his son that if he would study anatomy thoroughly under his guidance he should have the finest flute that could be bought. Hector shared his anatomical lessons with his cousin Robert, who was a good violinist, and the two boys therefore spent more time over music than over osteology. Robert, however, really worked hard at anatomy and was always ready with his demonstrations; Hector drew down upon himself many a reprimand because he had not thoroughly prepared his work. Eventually the two boys had learned all that Dr Berlioz could teach them, and it was decided that they should go to Paris together to finish their medical training.

Hector was nineteen when he went to Paris, in 1822, and he loyally tried to keep his promise to his father, throwing himself with all goodwill into the studies that were so repugnant to him. He said afterward that he might have become a commonplace physician if he had not gone one night to the opera and heard some beautiful music. That night was a revelation to him; he became half frantic with excitement and enthusiasm.

Hector now visited the opera again and again. Learning that the Conservatoire library, with its wealth of scores, was open to the public, he began to study the music of his adored Gluck. He read, reread, and copied long parts and scenes from these wonderful scores, even forgetting to eat, drink, or sleep in his wild enthusiasm. Of course, he felt now that his career as a doctor must be given up for ever, and he wrote home that in spite

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

of his father, mother, friends, and relations he would become a musician and nothing else.

The choir-master of St Roch knew of Hector's musical abilities, and he suggested that the young man should write a Mass for Innocents' Day. He promised that the choir-boys should copy the parts, and that after ample rehearsals the work should be performed with a full choir and orchestra. Naturally Hector set to work in earnest. But alas! when the first trial was made of the compositions it was found that the choir-boys had made so many mistakes in copying the score that nothing but confusion prevailed. Greatly chagrined, Hector rewrote the whole composition and copied out all the parts himself rather than have another *fiasco* from the amateur copyists. This took him three months to carry out, but when it was completed it was performed at St Roch, a friend of his advancing him the funds, and it received much favourable comment from the Press.

The hostility of Hector's family to his musical career died down to a certain extent after the performance of the Mass, but it was renewed with greater vigour than ever when he failed to pass the entrance examinations at the Conservatoire. His father wrote to him that if he persisted in staying in Paris he would stop his allowance. Lesueur, his teacher, promised to intercede on his behalf, and wrote an appealing letter, which really made matters worse instead of better. Then Hector returned home in order to plead his own cause in person.

He was received with much coldness by his family, but at last his father gave his consent to his returning to Paris for a short time. His mother, however, was so bitterly opposed to his ambitions that she declared that if he went she would disown him and never see him again. It was thus, with no kind look or word from his mother, that Hector again set out for Paris, although for the



time being he was reconciled to his father and other relations.

The young enthusiast now began life anew in Paris. He had to practise strict economy in order to pay back the loan for the Mass, and this he did by living in a tiny fifth-floor room, giving up restaurant meals, and contenting himself with a diet of plain bread, raisins, prunes, or dates. He also obtained a few pupils, and he even had a chance to sing on the music-hall stage at the enormous sum of fifty francs per month!

These were strenuous days for the ardent young musician. His days were filled with teaching in order that he might earn his bread; whenever he had a spare moment he spent it on composition, and whenever he received a free ticket he attended the opera. But, in spite of many privations, he found a great deal of happiness. At the opera he made a point of following the whole performance from the score he had before him, and thus in time he came to know the sound—the voice, as it were—of each instrument of the orchestra. He would watch for rare and unusual combinations of sounds, and he would beg the various musicians to explain to him the compass and powers of their instruments. By such means as these, and by the careful study of Beethoven, Weber, and Spontini, he helped to perfect his own art.

When the Conservatoire examinations of 1827 were held Hector again presented himself, and this time he passed the preliminary test. The task set for the general competition was to write music for “Orpheus torn by the Bacchantes,” but the incompetent pianist whose duty it was to play over the compositions for the judges could make nothing of Hector’s score. The six judges, headed by Cherubini, the director of the Conservatoire, voted against the aspirant, and he was unsuccessful for the second time.

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

Shortly after this discomfiture there came to Berlioz the revelation of the art of Shakespeare. An English company of actors had come to Paris, and on the first night *Hamlet* was performed. The part of Ophelia was played by Henrietta Smithson, who, five years later, became the wife of Berlioz.

In his diary the composer wrote: "Shakespeare, coming upon me unawares, struck me down as with a thunderbolt. His lightning spirit opened to me the highest heaven of Art and revealed to me the best and grandest and truest that earth can give." He began now to worship both the genius of Shakespeare and the art of the beautiful English actress, and every evening found him at the theatre; his days were spent in a kind of dumb despair, dreaming of Shakespeare and of Miss Smithson, who had quickly become the darling of Paris.

Youth, however, does not permit long of despair, and soon the musician in Berlioz began to reassert itself. He determined that he would make every effort to acquire a name for himself, and thus compel the actress to hear of him. For this purpose he arranged to give a concert of his own works, a thing which up to that time no French composer had ever done.

In 1828, in the early spring of the year, he set to work with great energy, writing sixteen hours a day in order to carry out his wonderful plan. The concert which was the result of so much labour was given at the end of May. But it met with a very modified success, and Miss Smithson was far too much absorbed in her own affairs ever to have heard even of the composer who had dared and risked so much to make a name that might attract her attention.

Dr Berlioz again stopped his son's allowance, and the composer turned to his pen for his support. He began to write for musical journals, but as he was ignorant of

the ways of journalism his wild utterances were the despair of his friends. Later his trenchant pen was both admired and feared. In June of that year he entered the Conservatoire contest for the third time, and he now succeeded in winning a gold medal as a second prize.

And now a new influence came into his life which for a time overshadowed his passion for Shakespeare and Miss Smithson: this was his love for Marie Moke, a beautiful and talented girl, who later on achieved considerable fame as a pianist.

Before her meeting with Berlioz Marie Moke had been much beloved by Ferdinand Hiller, composer, pianist, and one of Hector's most intimate friends. Marie had become much interested in the young Frenchman from Côte-Saint-André from Hiller's accounts of his struggles and mental sufferings. Then they were thrown together in a school where both gave lessons, she on the piano and Hector on the guitar. They met constantly, and her dainty beauty and musical talents won a warm place in the affections of the impressionable young man. She was then but eighteen while her admirer was twenty-five. Hiller soon saw how matters stood and behaved very handsomely toward them. He wished them every happiness, declared that it was fate that had worked against him and for them, and went to Frankfort that he might forget his own sorrow in new surroundings.

Then, in 1830, Berlioz won the Grand Prix de Rome for which he had striven so hard, and which entitled him to five years' study, free of expense, in the Italian centre of music. But with his new-found love for Marie he felt great reluctance in leaving Paris.

On August 23, 1830, Berlioz wrote to a friend:

"I have gained the Prix de Rome. It was awarded unanimously—a thing never before known. My sweet Ariel was dying of anxiety when I told her the news;

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

her dainty wings were all ruffled, till I smoothed them with a word. Even her mother, who does not look too favourably on our love, was moved to tears.

"On November 1 there is to be a concert at the Italian Theatre. I am asked to write an overture, and I am taking as my subject Shakespeare's *Tempest*, which I shall write in quite a new style. My great concert, with the *Symphonie Fantastique*, will take place on November 14, but I must have a theatrical success. Camille's parents insist on that as a condition of our marriage, and I hope I shall succeed."

Both concerts were highly successful, and the young composer passed from deepest anxiety to exuberant delight. He wrote to the same friend:

"The *Tempest* is to be played a second time at the Opera. It is new, fresh, strange, grand, sweet, tender, surprising. Fétis wrote two splendid articles about it for the *Revue Musicale*. My marriage is fixed for Easter 1832, on condition that I do not lose my pension, and that I go to Italy for one year. My blessed *Symphonie* has done the deed."

The following January Berlioz went home to his family, who had now become reconciled to his choice of music as a profession, and overwhelmed him with compliments, caresses, and tender solicitude. The parents had fully forgiven their gifted son.

In 1831 Hector Berlioz set out for Rome, where he was to reside in the Villa Medici, a palace many centuries old which had been reserved by the Académie of France as a home for her students. The sole obligation of these students was to send once a year to the Académie in Paris a sample of the work they had composed in that period.

Berlioz was now twenty-seven and very striking in appearance. A mass of reddish-auburn hair crowned a high forehead; his features, and especially his nose, were prominent in character; his expression was full

of sensitive refinement. He had an excitable and ardent temperament, but in the knowledge of the ways of the world he was often as simple as a child. He was welcomed by the other students with many humorous and friendly jests on his curious appearance.

Hardly had he settled down to work when he learned that his lady-love, Marie Moke, had forsaken him and married Pleyel. In a wild state of frenzy he determined to go at once to Paris and seek revenge. He had got as far as Nice when he suddenly grew calmer, and settled down in that beautiful town for a month. During this time he wrote his Overture to *King Lear*, and he then returned to Rome by way of Genoa and Florence.

By July 1832 Berlioz had returned to Côte-Saint-André on a visit to his home. He had spent a year in Italy, had seen a great deal, composed a number of important works—but he left Rome without regrets, and found the familiar landscape near his home much more fascinating than anything that Italy could show.

The remainder of the summer Berlioz spent in the beautiful Dauphiné country, at work on the *Damnation of Faust*, and in the autumn he returned to Paris. Thoughts of Miss Smithson were now never very far from him, and he called at the house where she used to live, in the hope that he might be able to find a lodging there. He was successful in this, and he also learned that Miss Smithson had returned to Paris to manage a new theatre which was about to open in a few days.

Berlioz, however, was planning a concert of his own compositions, and he did not trust himself to see the woman he had so long adored until his own venture was over. But it happened that some friends had induced Miss Smithson to attend the concert, which was a tremendous success, and the composer had the happiness of meeting the actress the same evening.



## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

The next day Berlioz called on her, and their friendship grew apace. Before very long they became engaged, although her mother and sister and the parents of Berlioz all opposed their engagement. Henrietta Smithson's theatrical ventures nearly ruined her, and she was weakened by a fall which crippled her for some years, but despite these misfortunes Berlioz and she were married in the summer which followed their first meeting.

And now there opened to Berlioz a life of stress and struggle inseparable from such a nature as his. At one moment he was in the highest heaven of happiness and the next in the depths of despair; his wife's heavy debts were a load to carry, but he manfully did his best to shoulder them. Every work that he was now able to compose was produced under the most trying circumstances of one kind or another.

One of his happiest ventures was a concert of his own compositions given at the Conservatoire on October 22, 1833. Of it he wrote:

"The concert, for which I engaged the very best artists, was a triumphant success. My musicians beamed with joy all evening, and to crown all, I found waiting for me a man with long black hair, piercing eyes, and wasted form. Catching my hand, he poured forth a flood of burning praise and appreciation. It was Paganini!"

Paganini commissioned Berlioz to write him a solo for him to play on his beautiful viola by Stradivarius. At first the composer demurred and then made the attempt. The result was not exactly what the great violinist required, but the themes afterward proved useful to Berlioz as a basis for his composition *Childe Harold*.

The next great work which Berlioz undertook was his famous Requiem. It seems that in 1836 the French Minister of the Interior set aside an annual sum of three thousand francs to be given to the composer whom he

## BERLIOZ

---

should select to write either a Mass or an oratorio to be performed at the Government's expense.

"I shall begin with Berlioz," he announced; "I am sure he could write a good Requiem."

After many delays and difficulties this work was completed and performed in a way the composer described as "a magnificent triumph."

Like most composers, Berlioz always wished to produce an opera, and at last he chose the subject of *Benvenuto Cellini*. But he was so greatly tied to his journalistic bread-winning efforts that it is doubtful if he would ever have found time to write it if it had not been for his friend, Ernest Legouvé, who offered to lend him two thousand francs. This loan made him independent for a little time and gave him the necessary leisure in which to compose.

The music of *Childe Harold* was now finished, and Berlioz advertised both this and the *Symphonie Fantastique* for a concert at the Conservatoire on December 16, 1838. Paganini was present and declared that he had never been so much moved by any music before. He dragged the composer back to the platform where some of the musicians still lingered, and there knelt and kissed his hand. The next day he sent Berlioz a cheque for twenty thousand francs.

Berlioz and his wife were both very highly strung, and therefore sure to have plenty of disagreements in their daily life. Thus it came about that after a while a temporary separation seemed advisable. Berlioz made every provision in his power for her comfort, and then set out on various tours to make his compositions known.

Concerts were given in Stuttgart, Hechingen, Weimar, Leipzig, and in Dresden. Another time he toured Brunswick, Hamburg, Berlin, Hanover, and finally Darmstadt, where the Grand Duke not only insisted that he should

## STORY -LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

take the full receipts for the concert, but refused to allow him to pay any of the expenses.

And now Berlioz returned to Paris and the treadmill of writing again. With such a mentality as his he could both plan and execute musical enterprises on a grand scale, and it was proposed that he and Strauss should give a couple of great concerts in the Exhibition Building. He gathered together a body of 1022 performers, who were all paid except the singers from the lyric theatres, who volunteered to help for the love of music. It was a tremendous undertaking and proved to be a great artistic triumph.

The exertion of giving these concerts told greatly on the health of Berlioz, and after their performance he was sent south by his physician, to recuperate on the shores of the Mediterranean. He afterward gave concerts in Marseilles, Lyons, and Lille, and then travelled to Vienna.

Of his visit to Vienna Berlioz wrote :

" My reception by all in Vienna—even by my fellow-ploughmen, the critics—was most cordial ; they treated me as a man and a brother, for which I am heartily grateful. After my third concert there was a grand supper, at which my friends presented me with a silver-gilt baton, and the Emperor sent me eleven hundred francs with the odd compliment : ' Tell Berlioz I was really amused.' "

The composer's way now led through Hungary. He gave performances both at Pest and Prague, where he was royally entertained and given a silver cup.

On returning to Paris he had much domestic trouble to bear. His wife was paralysed, and his only son, Louis, wished to leave home and go to sea as a sailor—which he did eventually, though much against the wishes of both parents.

Berlioz now produced his *Damnation of Faust* at the Opera, but it was a failure, and he had to look for some

## BERLIOZ

---

new way to retrieve his fortunes. He then conceived the idea of giving concerts in Russia, and with the help of some of his friends, who advanced him the necessary money for his travels, he was able to carry out his plan. On February 14, 1847, he set out for Russia. Both financially and artistically his visits to St Petersburg and Moscow were successful in the highest degree, and in the Russian capital his *Romeo and Juliet* was performed. The composer then arranged to spend ten days in Berlin, as the King of Prussia had expressed his desire to hear the *Damnation of Faust*. Then he continued his journeyings to Paris and to London, everywhere scoring new triumphs.

For the next few years the composer's life was overshadowed by bereavements. His father was the first to die, then a favourite sister was taken from him, and on March 3, 1854, his wife passed quietly away. All these sorrows told greatly on the sensitive and highly strung man, and sometimes his griefs seemed almost greater than he could bear.

About six months after the death of his wife Berlioz felt that he could no longer face his loneliness, and he again married; his second wife was a woman for whom he had much admiration and respect, as she had been of great assistance to him in his musical work for at least fourteen years.

The remaining span of Berlioz' life was outwardly more peaceful and happy. He continued to travel and compose, and everywhere he went he was honoured and admired. Among his later compositions were the *Te Deum*, *Childhood of Christ*, *Lelio*, *Beatrice and Benedict*, and *The Trojans*. And now, after what he called thirty years of slavery, he was able to resign his post of critic—"Thanks to *The Trojans*," he declared, "the wretched quill-driver is free!"

A touching episode, told in his vivid way, was the

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

meeting late in life with his early love, Estelle of the pink slippers. He called on her and found her a widow living in quiet retirement, grieving over the loss of both her husband and children. They had a poignant hour of reminiscences and for some time afterward they corresponded with one another.

On March 8, 1869, Hector Berlioz died. The honour in which he had been held could be gauged from the numerous wreaths which were placed upon his coffin—from the St Cecilia Society, from the youths of Hungary, from Russian nobles, and from the town of Grenoble, his old home. The French Institute sent a deputation to his funeral, and the National Guard played selections from the composer's *Funeral Symphony*.

The music of Berlioz is conceived on large lines in broad masses of tone-colour, with new harmonies and imposing effects. He won his place in the musical world through many trials and hardships, and his music is often the expression of the mental struggles of a most intense nature. The future will surely witness a greater appreciation of the merits of his works than has up to the present been accorded to them.



XIV  
FRANZ LISZT  
(1811-86)

HOW difficult it is to tell in a few pages the story of a life so complex and absorbing as that of Franz Liszt—in his day the king of pianists, a composer of glowing originality, diplomat, courtier, and man of the world!

Franz was born on October 21, 1811, that eventful year known as the “year of the comet.” On the night of his birth the tail of the meteor seemed to light up the roof of the Liszt home and was regarded as an omen of destiny. During his childhood he is said by his mother to have been loving and cheerful, never naughty, and always most obedient. He seemed to be religious by nature, loving to go to church on Sundays and fast-days, and his good mother fostered his pious inclinations. The midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, when Liszt’s father carrying a lantern led the way to church along the country road through the silent night, filled the child’s thoughts with mystic awe. These early impressions doubtless influenced the creations of Liszt when older, especially that part of his *Christus* entitled “Christmas Oratorio.”

Let us take a glimpse into the home life of this musical genius on a day before he was yet six years old.

A storm raged outside, but all was warmth and simple comfort in the large sitting-room of a steward’s cottage belonging to the small estate of Raiding in Hungary.

It was evening, and now that the labours of the day were over Adam Liszt could call the precious hours his

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

own. With him music was a real passion, and he was now seated before an old piano playing a composition of Haydn, the master whom he greatly venerated. He spent all his leisure time in studying music, and had a certain amount of knowledge of many instruments; he had taught himself how to play the piano and was wonderfully proficient for one who was self-taught. Adam Liszt made a striking figure as he sat there, his fine head, with its mass of light hair, thrown back, and his stern features softening as he played the exquisite music of Haydn.

At a table near by sat his wife, her dark head with its glossy braids bent over her sewing. Hers was a sweet and kindly face, betraying the gentle nature which endeared her to every one she met.

Near the old piano stood the little five-year-old Franz, wholly absorbed in the music. His fair curls fell all round his childish face, and his deep blue eyes were raised to his father as though he were a magician capable of creating all this beauty of sound.

Adam paused for a moment, and little Franz awoke as though from a trance.

"Did you like that, Franzerl?" asked his father, looking down at him.

The child bent his curly head, hardly able to speak.

"And do you want to be a musician when you grow up?" continued his father.

Franzerl nodded; then, pointing to a picture of Beethoven on the wall, he exclaimed with beaming eyes: "I want to be such a musician as he is!"

Adam Liszt had already, at the child's earnest and oft-repeated request, taught his tiny son the elements of music. He had naturally no method, since he was self-taught, but in spite of this Franz made remarkable progress. He could read the notes and find the keys with as much ease as though he had practised them for

## LISZT

---

years. He had a wonderful ear and an astonishing memory. His father cherished the hope that some day he would become a great musician and carry out the dream which he had failed to realize for himself.

Long before Franz knew the letters of the alphabet or understood the rudiments of writing he could scribble the notes of music, which he had learned without any instruction to write. When he was playing the piano the smallness of his hands were a great source of trouble to him, but his ingenuity knew no bounds when it was turned to the mastery of some musical difficulty—and he resorted to all kinds of comical expedients, such as sometimes playing extra notes with the tip of his nose!

He was an open-minded, frank, truth-loving child, always ready to confess what minor faults were his. Born in Hungary, he was never taught to speak the native tongue, as this was used only by the peasants, but in the Liszt household German was always spoken as being the polite language of the country.

The pronounced musical talent of his boy was a great source of pride to Adam Liszt, who often spoke of it to his friends, and in time the boy became known to them as "the artist." The result of all this talk was that when a concert was given at the neighbouring town of Oldenburg Adam was asked if he would allow his wonder-child to play at it.

When Franz, who was now a handsome boy of nine, heard of the concert he was overjoyed at having the opportunity of playing in public, and it was a happy day for him when he set out with his father for Oldenburg. He played a concerto by Reis and a fantasia of his own composition, accompanied by the orchestra. In this first public attempt Franz proved that he possessed two qualities that are essential to success—talent and determination. So highly delighted with his prowess were all

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

those who heard the youthful genius that Adam then and there made arrangements to give a second concert for Franz only. This was done and was as great a triumph as the first.

Adam had now fully made up his mind that Franz was to be a musician. He resigned his post of steward at Raiding on the boy's behalf, in order that he might take him to Vienna for further musical studies.

On their way to the Austrian capital they first halted at Eisenstadt to call on Prince Esterházy. Their host was delighted with the boy's playing and gave him every possible encouragement, even placing his castle at Pressburg at his disposal for a concert. The Princess too was most cordial, and gave Franz several costly presents when they parted.

At Pressburg Adam arranged a concert to be given in the spacious drawing-rooms of Prince Esterházy's castle. He succeeded in interesting all the Hungarian aristocracy of the city, and a notable audience attended the concert. Little Franz achieved a triumph that evening because of the fire and originality of his playing. The men were all unanimous in his praise, while elegant women showered caresses upon the gifted child. Hearing that Adam Liszt had but little means to provide for his son's future musical training, six Hungarian noblemen agreed together to raise a subscription which would provide a yearly income for six years.

With this happy prospect in view Adam felt that he was now relieved of all further anxiety, and he wrote at once to Hummel, who was at the Court at Weimar, asking him to undertake Franz's musical education. Hummel, though a pianist of note, was of a very grasping nature, and stated in reply that he would be willing to accept Franz as his pupil at a fee of a louis-d'or for each lesson!

As soon as the father and son arrived in Vienna the

## LISZT

---

best teachers available were secured for Franz. Karl Czerny, who was considered to be the leading pianist of his time, and who had been a pupil of Beethoven, was first approached. He declined, as he was already besieged with would-be pupils, but when he had heard Franz play he was so greatly impressed with his talent that he relented and promised at once to teach him. Unlike Hummel, he had a nature that was most generous to struggling talent, and when at the end of twelve lessons Adam Liszt wished to pay for them he refused to take any money at all. He continued to teach Franz gratuitously for the whole period of his instruction—a year and a half.

At first the lessons under such a strict master of technique as Czerny were very irksome to the boy, who had been brought up without any method at all, and who had been allowed free and unrestrained rein for his own fancies. The boy was entirely without technical foundation for his music, but with the vanity of youth he imagined himself to be a great artist already because he could read rapidly at sight and glide over the keys with astonishing ease. Czerny soon showed him his failings and proved to him that a true musician must have a clear touch, smoothness of execution, and variety of tone. Franz rebelled at first, but finally settled down with goodwill to hard study, and the result soon astonished his teacher. Franz quickly acquired a richness of feeling and beauty of tone wonderful in such a child.

Liszt was taught the theory of music by Salieri. His teacher made him analyse and play scores, and compose little pieces of music as well as short hymns. In all of these he made excellent progress.

Franz now began to realize that it was necessary for him to know about other things than music, and he set to work to teach himself how to read and write. He now had many opportunities of meeting the aristocracy of



## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

Vienna through the influence of his noble Hungarian patrons, and even in these early days of his career his talents, vivacity, and grace won for him the admiration of all the ladies whom he met.

After eighteen busy months in Vienna Adam Liszt decided that his son should make his *début* at a public concert. It was arranged for December 1, 1822, at the town hall, and a number of fine artists promised to give their assistance. When the evening came little Franz, with beaming face and sparkling eyes, played with more skill, fire, and confidence than he had ever felt before. The applause which greeted his performance was overwhelming, and on January 12, 1823, Franz repeated his success at another concert also held in the town hall.

It was after this second concert that the reputation of Franz reached the knowledge of Beethoven. This great master had always been the object of the boy's warmest admiration, and several times he and his father had made unavailing efforts to see him. At last Schindler was appealed to, and he promised to do what he could to help them. The composer was now quite deaf, and communication was made to him by means of writing. Schindler therefore wrote in Beethoven's diary :

"Little Liszt has entreated me to beg you to write him a theme for to-morrow's concert. He will not break the seal until the concert begins. Czerny is his teacher—the boy is only eleven years old. Do come to his concert ; it will encourage the child. Promise me you will come."

The concert took place on April 13, 1823, when a very large audience filled the Redouten Saal. When Franz stepped upon the platform he saw the great Beethoven seated near the front, and a great joy filled him. Now, he thought, he was to play for the great man whom he had worshipped from afar all his life. He put forth every effort to be worthy of such an honour. His whole being

## LISZT

---

seemed to thrill to his music—he had never before played with such fire, never achieved a greater success. Amid the applause which followed, Beethoven rose, came upon the platform, clasped the boy in his arms, and kissed him repeatedly, to the frantic cheers of the audience.

From this third concert dates Liszt's great reputation as a pianist, for he had now demonstrated at eleven years of age that he was one of the leading *virtuosi* of the time. The Press praised him highly, and many compared him with the wonderful child-genius Mozart.

Adam Liszt now wished his son to see more of the world and to make further progress with his studies; he also desired to make his talents known to a wider public. He decided to take the boy to Paris, where Cherubini, the celebrated composer, was at that time director of the Conservatoire.

On the journey from Vienna to Paris Franz gave several concerts at different cities. Munich acclaimed him as a "second Mozart," and Strassburg and Stuttgart gave him a great ovation.

Arrived in Paris the two Liszts at once made for the Conservatoire, in the hope that Franz might be allowed to study there for a time, as it was the best-known school for counterpoint and composition of its day. Cherubini, however, refused even to read the letters of recommendation that they brought, saying that no foreigner, however talented, could be admitted to the French National School of Music. Franz was deeply hurt by this refusal and begged with tears in his eyes to be allowed to study at the Conservatoire, but Cherubini was immovable.

Shortly afterward they made the acquaintance of Ferdinando Paër, who was of a more kindly disposition than Cherubini, and he offered to give the child lessons in composition.

Franz made wonderful progress in his compositions,

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

and he also became more and more widely known as a pianist of distinction. After he had played in a few of the great houses he soon found himself the fashion, and "*le petit Litz*" was in the greatest demand for all the musical *soirées*. Thus he became acquainted with the most distinguished musicians of the day. Whenever he played in public the Press called him "the eighth wonder of the world," "another Mozart," and other superlative names, and his father was naturally overjoyed that his fondest hopes were being realized. Franz not only stood at the head of the *virtuosi*, but he was also making rapid strides in composition. He even attempted at this time an operetta, *Don Sancho*, which later had several performances.

Erard, the eminent piano-maker, now made a proposal that Adam Liszt should accompany him to London, where he had a branch business, and bring with him his thirteen-year-old son. Adam saw the opportunities that his acceptance might bring and at once acquiesced in the plan. But in order to save expense it was decided that Franz's mother, who had joined them in Paris, should return to Austria and stay with a sister of hers until the visit to England was over.

Franz was greatly saddened at the thought that he must be parted from his gentle mother, but his father was stern on this point. The separation was a cruel one for the boy, and for a long time after they had parted he could not mention her name without tears.

In May 1824 the two Liszts set out for England with Erard, and on June 21 Franz gave his first public concert in London. This proved to be a great success, though the English were more reserved in their demonstrations than the impulsive, open-hearted French people. Franz also played for the aristocracy in their private homes and appeared at Court by command of King George IV. But the boy was quite happy to return to Paris at the end

## LISZT

---

of the London season and to resume his playing in the French *salons*.

In the following spring, accompanied by his father, Liszt made a tour of the French provinces and then set out for a second visit to England. He was now fourteen—a mere boy in years—but he was acclaimed as the greatest pianist of the day. He had developed so quickly and was so precocious that already he disliked to be called “*le petit Litz*,” for he felt that he was quite a man. Adam, however, wisely kept a strict watch on all his movements, despite his desire for independence.

The constant travelling had now told severely on the health of the elder Liszt, and it was decided that they should remain quietly in Paris for some time. In the year 1826 they set out on a second tour of French cities, and at Marseilles the young pianist met with an overwhelming reception.

Returning to Paris, Franz devoted much of his time to the ardent study of counterpoint under Anton Reicha, and after six months he had mastered the difficulties of this intricate art.

Adam Liszt and Franz spent the winter of 1826 in Switzerland, the boy playing in all the important cities. In the spring-time they returned to Paris, and in May they set out again for a third visit to England. On June 9, 1827, Franz gave a concert in London which proved how greatly he had gained in power and brilliancy. Moscheles, who was present, wrote: “Franz Liszt’s playing surpasses in power and the overcoming of difficulties anything that has yet been heard.”

The strain of so much travelling and concert-playing was now beginning seriously to affect the boy’s sensitive, excitable nature. He lost his sunny nature, grew quiet and at times almost morose. He began to frequent the church a great deal, and would have taken holy orders

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

had not his father definitely forbidden the step as a passing whim of his youth.

The boy's pale face and changed nature were a source of much anxiety to his father, and he felt that rest and a change of air were necessary for him. He therefore took him to the French watering-place of Boulogne-sur-Mer, where they both derived much benefit from their complete rest and the sea-bathing. Franz soon recovered his genial spirits and quickly regained his health and strength.

But with Adam Liszt the gain in health was only of a temporary nature. He was attacked by fever and in a few days succumbed to it completely. He was buried at the cemetery of Boulogne, leaving his son stunned by the great blow of his loss.

For some days Franz was prostrated, but at last his indomitable youth overcame his sorrow. Aroused to the sense of his responsibilities, he began to think of the future and how he must face it. He wrote to his mother at once, telling her what had happened, and saying that he would give up his concert tours to make a home for her in Paris by giving pianoforte lessons.

Looking closer into his finances, of which he had hitherto had no knowledge, Franz found that the expenses of his father's illness and death had exhausted all their little savings and that he was actually in debt. He decided to sell his cherished grand piano rather than owe any money, and he was thus able to pay off all his creditors. On his arrival in Paris his kindly old friend Érard invited him to make his home with him until his mother should join him.

The meeting of mother and son after their long separation was tender and happy. They began at once to look round for some place which they could make their home, and soon discovered a modest flat in the Rue Montholon.

As soon as it became known in Paris that Franz was willing to receive pupils many aristocratic people came



to him, and he was found to be a teacher of remarkable merit. Among his new pupils was the youngest daughter of the Minister of the Interior. This Caroline Saint-Cricq was a beautiful girl, as good and gentle as she was gifted, and of the same age as her youthful teacher—they were both scarcely seventeen at the time.

Under the eyes of her mother, Caroline's lessons went on from month to month, and the Countess Saint-Cricq did not fail to notice the growing attachment between the young people. But love's young dream was to prove of short duration for master and pupil. The Countess fell ill, and the lessons were discontinued for a time; it was not until the death of her mother that Caroline again met Franz.

There was now another bond between the two—their sympathy over the loss of a much-loved parent, Franz of his father, Caroline of her mother. The Count had requested that the music lessons should be resumed. But when he found that the young master lingered too long in conversation with his pupil after their lessons he dismissed him abruptly and all further intercourse was thus ended.

Franz was in the depths of grief and despair, and his mother did all that she could to soothe him, but without avail. For days and weeks he remained at home, neglecting his pupils and his piano. He thought of the Church with renewed ardour and told his mother that he had now decided to become a monk. His spirits sank very low; he fell ill and was unable to leave his house; everywhere it was reported that the brilliant young pianist had died.

But again he rallied, and his strong constitution stood him in good stead. His strength slowly returned to him, with its accompanying activity and love of life.

During his long convalescence he was seized with a great desire for knowledge, and read everything he could find. He would often sit at the piano, busying his fingers

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

with technique while he read a book on the stand before him. Formerly he had given all his time to music and languages, but now he read also literature, politics, history, and the exact sciences. A new line of reading would be suggested to him immediately by some word casually dropped in conversation.

Then came the revolution of 1830. Every one was talking politics, and Franz, with his excitable spirits, would have rushed into the conflict if his mother had not restrained him.

Awakened by all his sorrows to the responsibilities and ambitions of manhood, Franz sought to broaden his art and to make his piano speak of higher things. The spirit, he knew, must speak through a material medium. He realized this all the more when Paganini, that wizard of the violin, appeared in Paris in 1831, and Franz heard his thrilling performances on his wonderful instrument. He now tried to achieve on the piano what Paganini accomplished on the violin in the matter of quality and intensity. He procured the newly published *Caprices* for the violin and tried to learn their tonal secrets, and made transcriptions of the pieces for the piano.

Liszt now became fast friends with the young composer Hector Berlioz, and was much influenced by his compositions along new harmonic lines. Chopin, the young Polish artist, now appeared in Paris, playing his Concerto in E Minor, his Mazurkas and Nocturnes, and revealed new phases of musical art. His calm composure tranquillized the excitable nature of Liszt, who learned from him how to "express in music the poetry of the aristocratic *salon*." To the end Liszt remained a true and admiring friend of Chopin, and in 1849 wrote a poetic sketch of the Pole.

At the age of twenty-three Liszt resumed his playing in aristocratic homes and also in public, showing himself

to be quite a different artist from any the Parisians had previously known. His bold new harmonies in his own compositions, and the rich effects, showed a deep knowledge of his art. He had transcribed a number of the most striking compositions by Berlioz for the piano and performed them with great applause.

Everywhere he went the handsome and gifted young artist was the object of admiration. He fell under the sway of George Sand at this period, and was soon numbered among the most intimate friends of that wonderful woman writer. Later a mutual attraction existed between him and the young and beautiful Countess Laprunarède. Her husband, the elderly Count, was pleased with the dashing young musician and invited him to spend the winter at his *château* in Switzerland, where the witty Countess afterward virtually kept him prisoner.

In the winter of 1833, when the *salons* opened again, Liszt frequented them as before. He was in the height of his youth and fame when he met the woman who was to be linked with his destiny for the next ten years.

This lady was the beautiful Countess d'Agoult, who was so greatly captivated by the brilliant talents of the handsome musician that she left her husband and child and became for ten years the faithful companion of Liszt on his travels throughout Europe. Part of the time they lived in Switzerland, and it was here that many of the composer's works were written.

Many writers agree that Liszt endeavoured to dissuade the Countess from her love for him, and that he behaved as honourably as he could in the circumstances. However that may be, the accomplished and literary Countess had her own way, and for a whole decade they remained inseparable companions. Of their three children the boy died very young, but both daughters grew up and married famous men. Blandine became the wife of Émile Ollivier

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

the French statesman and *littérateur*, while Cosima married first Hans von Bülow and later Richard Wagner.

In 1834 Liszt journeyed to Russia. He had intended to take the Countess with him, but as she was in failing health he left her and her children in Paris with his mother. His first concert in St Petersburg realized the enormous sum of fifty thousand francs—about two thousand pounds—and instead of giving only one concert in Moscow as he had planned he was obliged to give six.

Later in the same year he played in Bavaria, Saxony, and other parts of Germany. He then settled in Weimar for a time as the Grand Ducal Kapellmeister. Then, with a craving for further successes, he toured Spain and Portugal in 1844 and 1845.

Liszt performed a generous act when he laboured on behalf of the Beethoven monument to be erected in the master's birthplace of Bonn. The monument was to be paid for by subscriptions given by the various Princes of Germany, and Liszt helped to make up the deficit, coming to Bonn to organize a festival in honour of the event. He also composed a Cantata for the opening day of the festival, the heavy expenses of which he insisted on paying out of his own pocket, thus nearly ruining himself by his enthusiasm.

The political events of 1848 brought Liszt back to Weimar, and he resumed his post as Court director of music. He now directed his energies toward making Weimar the first musical city in Germany. As a great admirer of Wagner's genius he undertook to perform his works in this city and to spread his name and fame. Wagner himself testified to the fact that he would never have attained his great vogue had it not been for the devoted efforts of Liszt.

While living in Weimar Liszt made frequent journeys to Rome and to Paris, and in 1861 it was falsely rumoured

## LISZT

---

that the object of his visits to the Italian capital was to gain Papal consent to his marriage with the Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein.

During a visit to Rome in 1864 the musician was unable to resist any longer the mysticism of the Church. He decided to take orders and was made an *abbé*.

From this time Abbé Franz Liszt devoted himself actively to composition, and he also continued to teach a great number of pupils. These flocked to him from all parts of the world, and many of the greatest artists of the musical world of to-day were numbered among his students.

In 1871 the Hungarian Cabinet created him a noble, giving him an annual pension of six hundred pounds, and in 1875 he was made director of the Academy at Budapest. In addition he was a member of nearly all the European orders of chivalry.

In the summer of 1886 Liszt went to Bayreuth, as was his custom every year, in order to assist in the production of Wagner's masterpieces. He was now seventy-five, and when he was seized with an attack of pneumonia he had naturally little strength to fight against this malady. After a short illness he succumbed on August 1, dying in the house of his friend Herr Frohlich, near Wagner's Villa Wahnfried. Thus passed a great composer, a world-famous pianist, and a noble and kindly spirit.

Liszt wrote much that was beautiful and inspiring for the piano, his chosen instrument, and he created a new epoch for the *virtuoso*. His fifteen Hungarian Rhapsodies, Sonata in B Minor, Concert Études, and many transcriptions appear often on our modern programmes, and numerous other pieces are yet to be made known. He was the originator of the symphonic poem for the orchestra, while his sacred music, such as the oratorio *Christus* and the beautiful sacred opera *St Elizabeth*, is a monument to his great genius.



## XV

### GIUSEPPE VERDI

(1813-1901)

**A**T the foot of the Apennines, in the tiny hamlet of Le Roncole, which is hardly more than a cluster of workmen's cottages and therefore seldom to be found on any maps, Giuseppe Verdi, one of the greatest of operatic composers, was born on October 9, 1813.

At the time of his birth Europe was seething with many wars, and when Giuseppe was one year old the Russian and Austrian soldiers marched through Italy, killing and destroying everywhere they went. When it was known that some of them were on their way to Le Roncole all the women and children ran to the church and locked themselves in for safety. But these savage men had no respect for the house of God. They took the hinges off the doors, rushed in, and either murdered or wounded all the helpless people who were taking refuge inside.

Luigia Verdi, with the baby Giuseppe in her arms, contrived to escape, and running up a narrow staircase to the belfry she hid herself and her child among some old lumber. Here she remained in fear and trembling until the drunken troops were far away from the village.

Luigia Verdi was the wife of Carlo Verdi, who kept a small inn at Le Roncole and also a little shop where they sold sugar, coffee, matches, spirits, tobacco, and clay pipes. Once a week the good Carlo would walk up to Busseto, which was three miles away, with two empty baskets slung across his shoulders, returning later with

both baskets filled with articles for his shop. Like their neighbours, the Verdis were simply poor but respectable working people, but their cottage was perhaps the most frequented of all the little cluster.

Giuseppe Verdi when a child was a very quiet, thoughtful little fellow, always very good and obedient, and sometimes rather sad. The serious expression found in all of his portraits as a man was noticeable with him even as a child, and he seldom joined in the boisterous games of other children. The only thing that seemed to enliven him was the advent of a hand-organ in the village street—as soon as he heard the first strains of music nothing could keep him in the house, and he would follow the organ as far as his little legs could carry him. But the child was a general favourite in spite of his shyness and reserve, for he was both intelligent and loving.

In 1820, when Giuseppe was seven years old, Carlo Verdi committed a great extravagance for a poor innkeeper of his position—he bought a spinet for his son!

Little Giuseppe practised very diligently on his spinet. At first he could play only the first five notes of the scale, then he tried to find out chords. His joy was great one day at having sounded the major third and fifth in C. But the next day he could not find these chords again, and at last he fretted himself into such a temper that he tried to break the spinet in pieces with a hammer. The commotion he made brought his father into the room. When he saw what the child was doing he gave him such a box on the ears that he came to his senses at once; he saw that he could not punish the spinet because he was not clever enough himself to strike a common chord.

There were many early evidences of the child's passion for music, and a semi-tragic incident with a happy ending is recounted of his boyhood. One day he was assisting the parish priest at Mass in the little church at Le Roncole,

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

and at the elevation of the Host exquisite harmonies were sounding from the organ. Little Giuseppe stood perfectly motionless, listening to the beautiful music, quite unconscious of everything about him. "Water," whispered the priest to the acolyte, but the child did not hear him. A second time the priest repeated the word, but again there was no response. "Water," said the priest for the third time, and to bring back the boy's attention to his duties gave him a sharp kick. Unfortunately he did this so hard that the boy fell down the steps of the altar, hitting his head on the stone floor, and he had to be taken unconscious into the sacristy.

After this Baistrocchi, the organist of the village church, took an interest in the boy who had been so much enthralled by his playing, and gave him music lessons. At the end of a year, however, he said that he had nothing more to teach his young pupil, and their lessons thus came to an end.

Two years later, when old Baistrocchi died, Giuseppe was made organist in his stead. His parents were naturally delighted at the honour done to their ten-year-old son, but the father felt that the boy ought to be sent to school, where he could learn reading, writing, and arithmetic. In his difficulty in finding a school he was helped by his good friend Pugnatta, a shoemaker living at Busseto.

Pugnatta agreed to give Giuseppe board and lodging and to send him to the best school in the town for the small sum of threepence a day. This generous offer pleased Carlo Verdi greatly, and little Giuseppe was sent to Busseto to pursue his ordinary studies. He worked diligently at his lessons and attended the school regularly, but he still kept his post as organist at Le Roncole, walking there every Sunday morning and back again in the evening to Busseto. His pay as organist was

## VERDI

---

very small, even with the little he added to it by playing for weddings, christenings, and funerals. He also gained a few lire from a collection which it was customary for artists to make at harvest-time.

When making this collection Giuseppe had to trudge from door to door with a sack upon his back, and on one occasion he narrowly escaped drowning while going on his rounds. It was night-time, and he was walking homeward toward Le Roncole feeling very tired and hungry, and he did not notice that he had taken the wrong path. Suddenly he missed his footing in the darkness and fell into a deep canal. Had it not been for an old woman who was passing by the spot and heard his cries, the exhausted and benumbed boy would have been carried away by the current.

When Giuseppe had had two years of schooling his father suggested to Antonio Barezzi, the Busseto merchant from whom he bought wines and supplies for his inn and shop, that he should take the boy into his warehouse. Barezzi agreed, much to Giuseppe's joy, for his new master was an enthusiastic amateur musician and also the President of the Philharmonic Society, which met, rehearsed, and gave all its concerts at his house.

Giuseppe now worked hard in Barezzi's warehouse, but he always contrived to find time to attend all the Philharmonic rehearsals. He even began the task of copying out separate parts from the score. His earnestness in this work attracted the notice of the conductor, Ferdinand Provesi, who began to take a great interest in the boy and was the first to understand his talent and advise him to devote himself to music.

One of the canons in the cathedral had different plans for Giuseppe's future and offered to teach him Latin with a view to his entering the priesthood. He said to the boy: "Why do you want to study music? You have

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

a gift for Latin, and it would be much better for you to become a priest. What do you expect from your music? Do you think that some day you will become organist of Busseto! Stuff and nonsense! That can never be."

A short time after this there was a Mass at a chapel in Busseto where this canon held the service, and Giuseppe was called in unexpectedly to take the place of the organist, who was unable to attend. The priest was much impressed with the unusually beautiful organ music, and at the close of the service desired to see the organist. Great was his astonishment when he saw the scholar whom he had been seeking to turn aside from his musical studies.

"Whose music did you play?" he asked. "It was most beautiful."

"Why," answered the boy timidly, "I had no music, so I had to play extempore—I played just as I felt."

"Indeed," replied the canon; "well, I am a fool, and you cannot do better than to study music. Take my word for it."

Giuseppe studied under Ferdinand Provesi until he was sixteen, and his progress was so rapid that both the conductor and Barezzi felt that it was due to the boy that he should be sent to Milan to perfect his studies. Both as organist and as conductor of the Philharmonic this remarkable boy had often assisted Barezzi in his musical undertakings, and the records of the society still have several works written by Verdi at this time—works composed, copied, taught, rehearsed, and conducted by him when he was but sixteen years old.

There was an institution in Busseto called the Monte di Pietà which gave four scholarships annually to promising young men who had not the necessary money to pursue their studies in science or art. Through Barezzi's influence one of these scholarships was awarded to Giuseppe, and an arrangement was made whereby he



## VERDI

---

was to receive six hundred francs annually for two years instead of three hundred francs annually for a duration of four years. Barezzi himself advanced the money for the music lessons, board, and lodging in Milan; the priest gave him a letter of introduction to his nephew, a Milanese professor, who gave him a hearty welcome and insisted that he should live with him.

At the Conservatoire in Milan, as in so many large music schools, a great many students presented themselves for admittance by scholarship, and only one was chosen. Basili, who had other plans for the disposal of the scholarship, did not grant it to Giuseppe, and declared that his compositions were not of sufficient worth to merit his admittance. But the boy was undaunted, and at the suggestion of Alessandro Rollo, who was then the conductor of La Scala, he asked Lavigna to give him lessons in composition and orchestration. Now Lavigna was an able composer and a former pupil of the Conservatoire of Naples, and after he had examined some of the compositions Giuseppe had shown to Basili he willingly accepted the boy as his pupil.

When Lavigna was not at La Scala Giuseppe was often to be found at his master's house, and there he met many artists. One evening it chanced that Lavigna, Basili, and the young student were together, and the two masters talked of the deplorable result of a competition for the position of maestro di capella and organist at the church of San Giovanni di Monza. It seemed that not one of the twenty-eight young men who had taken part in the competition had known how to develop correctly the subject given by Basili for the construction of a fugue.

With something of a twinkle in his eye Lavigna remarked to Basili: "That really is an extraordinary thing! Well, look at Verdi, who has studied fugue for

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

two short years—I'll wager that he would have done better than your eight and twenty candidates."

"Really?" replied Basili in a somewhat vexed tone.

"Certainly," said Lavigna. "Do you remember your subject? Yes? Well, please write it down."

When Basili had written down the theme Lavigna handed it to his pupil, saying: "Sit down there at the table and begin at once to work out this subject."

Then the two friends resumed their conversation, taking no notice of the student until he came over to them and said quietly: "There, it is done."

Basili took the paper and examined it, showing signs of astonishment as he continued to read. When he came to the end he complimented the boy and then added: "But how is it that you have written a double canon on my subject?"

"It is because I found it rather poor and wished to embellish it," Verdi replied, remembering the reception he had had at the Conservatoire.

In 1833 Ferdinand Provesi died in Busseto, and Giuseppe keenly felt the loss of the master who had first shown him how to work to become a true artist. Setting aside his own feelings about his future, for he wished to do much greater things than this, he now returned to Busseto to fulfil his promise to take Provesi's place as organist at the cathedral and conductor of the Philharmonic—both of them big positions for a young man of twenty to fill.

Returned to Busseto, Verdi now fell in love with Margherita, the beautiful eldest daughter of Barezzi. The merchant greatly admired the young suitor for his musical gifts and therefore did not mind his poverty. He willingly gave his consent to their union, and in 1836 the young couple were married, all the members of the Philharmonic Society attending the function.

## VERDI

---

About the year 1831 there flourished in Milan a Philharmonic Society composed of excellent singers, who were under the leadership of Masini. Soon after Verdi had come to the city the Society had been preparing for a performance of Haydn's *Creation*, and Lavigna had suggested that his pupil should attend the rehearsals. There were three maestri who shared the conducting during rehearsals, and on one occasion none of these was present at the appointed hour. Masini, at a loss for a conductor, asked young Verdi to accompany from the full orchestral score, adding: "It will be sufficient if you merely play the bass."

Without the slightest hesitation Verdi took his place at the piano, and the singers felt at first that they would have little confidence in this slender, rather shabby-looking stranger. Verdi, however, soon warmed to his work, and after a while he grew so excited that he played the accompaniment with the left hand while conducting vigorously with the right. The rehearsal went off splendidly, and many people came forward to greet the young conductor, among them the Counts Pompeo Belgiojoso and Remato Borromes. After this proof of his ability Verdi was appointed to conduct the public performance, which was such a success that it was repeated by general request and was attended by the highest members of society.

Soon after this Count Borromes engaged Verdi to write a cantata for chorus and orchestra to honour the occasion of a marriage in his family. Verdi did so, but was never paid one sou for his labour. Masini next urged Verdi to compose an opera for the Teatro Filodrammatico, where he was the conductor, and handed him a libretto. Verdi at once accepted the offer, and, after making some alterations in the libretto, began to write the opera of *Oberto, Conte di San Bonifacio*.

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

Verdi had been obliged to take Provesi's old post in Busseto before he had completed his opera, but he worked at it during his leisure time in this town, and when he returned to Milan in 1838 he brought *Oberto* with him. Unfortunately he found that Masini was no longer the conductor at the Filodrammatico, and he lost all hope of seeing his opera produced. But after many delays the impresario sent for him and promised to bring the work out in the following season if the composer would make a few changes. Young and as yet unknown, Verdi was quite willing to do this.

*Oberto, Conte di San Bonifacio*, was produced with a reasonable amount of success and repeated several times. On this account the impresario Merelli made the young composer an excellent offer—to write three operas, one every eight months, to be performed either in Milan or in Vienna, as he was conductor in the latter place also. He promised to pay four thousand lire—about a hundred and fifty pounds—for each and to share the profits of the copyright.

To young Verdi this seemed an excellent opportunity to make his name and increase his finances, and he immediately accepted. Rossi wrote a libretto entitled *Proscritto*, and Verdi had already given some thought to the music when Merelli hastened from Vienna saying that he required a comic opera for the autumn season, and work on it must be begun at once. This was in the spring of 1840, and there was little time to be lost. Merelli produced three very commonplace librettos, none of which Verdi liked, but he chose the most promising and set to work on it without delay.

At this time Verdi was living in a small house near the Porta Ticinese with his wife and their two little sons. Almost as soon as he had begun to write the music for the comic opera he fell ill and was confined to his bed for

## VERDI

---

several days. Owing to his illness he had quite forgotten that the rent, which he always liked to pay on the very day it fell due, was now owing, and there was not enough money in the house to pay it. It was too late to borrow money from any of his friends, but his wife, rather than distress her sick husband, took some of her most valuable trinkets to a dealer and brought back the rent-money in exchange. When Verdi heard of her act of devotion and self-sacrifice he was greatly touched.

And now sorrow swept suddenly over the little family. At the beginning of April 1840 one of the little boys fell ill, and before the doctors could diagnose his trouble the child had died. A few days afterward the other small son also sickened and died. Both parents were distracted, and the young mother was inconsolable—she brooded over her grief day and night, and finally in June of the same year she followed her children to the grave.

In the midst of crushing sorrows like these Verdi was now expected to compose a comic opera! But he bravely completed his task. The opera, *Un Giorno di Regno*, was duly produced, but it was so hopeless a failure that it was performed once only and then put on one side. The composer was naturally despondent, and resolved to give up original work altogether. Merelli scolded him roundly for making such a decision and promised him that if he would take up his pen again he would produce any opera that Verdi might write, given two months' notice beforehand.

But the composer was in too restless a state of mind to write any more music for the present. His one idea now was to leave the house which was filled with so many sad memories for him, and he moved to a new residence near the Corsia di Servi.

One evening when he was in the town he met Merelli hurrying to the theatre, and without any hesitation the



## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

manager linked his arm in Verdi's and made him keep pace with him. Merelli told him that he was in absolute despair: he had secured a libretto by Solera which was "wonderful, marvellous, extraordinary, grand," but the composer he had engaged did not like it. What was he to do? Verdi bethought him of the libretto of *Proscritto* which Rossi had once written for him and he had never used, and he suggested this to Merelli. Rossi was at once sent for and produced a copy of the libretto. Then Merelli laid the other manuscript before Verdi, saying: "Look, here is Solera's libretto—such a beautiful subject! Take it home and read it over."

Verdi refused. "No, no, I am in no humour to read librettos," he said.

"It won't do you any harm to look at it," urged Merelli, and thrust it into the coat-pocket of the reluctant composer.

On reaching home Verdi pulled out the manuscript and threw it on the writing-table. As he did so a stanza from the book caught his eye, and he saw that it was almost a paraphrase from the Bible, the book which had been such a solace to him in the lonely days of his life. He began to read the story, growing more and more enthralled with it, yet it did not affect his resolution to give up composing.

As the days passed, however, the story began to take fire in Verdi's imagination, and almost against his will he wrote down a line of music here, a melody there—until at last, almost unconsciously, the opera of *Nabucodonosor* came into being.

The opera once finished, Verdi hastened to Merelli and reminded him of his promise. The impresario was quite honourable in his intention of fulfilling his promise, but he would not agree to bring out the opera until Easter, for the season of 1841 was already arranged. Verdi

## VERDI

---

refused to wait until Easter, as he knew that the best singers would not then be available. After many arguments and disputes it was finally arranged that the opera should be put on at once, but without any extra outlay for mounting. At the end of February 1842 rehearsals began, and on March 9 the first performance took place.

The success of *Nabucodonosor* was remarkable. No such 'first night' had been known at La Scala for many years. "I had hoped for success," said the composer, "but such a success—never!" The next day the whole of Italy was talking of Verdi. Donizetti, whose wealth of melodious music swayed the Italians as it did later the English, was so greatly impressed by it that he continually repeated: "It is fine—uncommonly fine!"

With this quick triumph Verdi's career as a composer may be said to have begun. In the following year *I Lombardi* was produced, and in 1844 *Ernani*. Then came in rapid succession ten more operas, among them *Attila* and *Macbeth*.

In 1847 Verdi came to London, and on July 2 brought out *I Masnadieri* at Her Majesty's Theatre. The cast included Lablanche, Gardoni, and Colletti, all of whom distinguished themselves greatly; and, above all, Jenny Lind, in a part composed expressly for her, acted admirably and sang her airs exquisitely. Still the opera was not a success, and no two critics could agree as to its merits. Verdi left England in disgust, and took his music to other countries in Europe where he would be sure of greater appreciation.

The advantage of his travels throughout Europe is shown in *Rigoletto*, which was brought out in Vienna in 1851. In this opera his true power manifests itself, and the music is lifted far above the ordinary Italian style of that time. With *Rigoletto* Verdi's second period begins.

Two years later *Il Trovatore* was produced in Rome.

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

Each scene brought down thunders of applause, until the very walls resounded and people outside took up the cry "Long live Verdi, Italy's greatest composer! Viva Verdi!" *Il Trovatore* was given in Paris in 1854, and in London in 1855.

Also in 1855 *La Traviata* was produced in Vienna. This work, so full of beautiful and delicate music, nearly proved a failure when first performed owing to a ludicrous incident—the part of the consumptive heroine of the opera who finally dies on the stage was performed by a prima donna of such extraordinary stoutness that the scene was received with shouts of laughter! After a number of operas which met with scant appreciation Verdi again achieved success in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, produced in Rome in 1859, and *La Forza del Destino*, produced in St Petersburg in 1862.

When Rossini, the operatic composer, died on November 13, 1868, Verdi suggested that a Requiem should be written jointly by the best Italian composers. The work was completed, but it was unsatisfactory because of the diversity of its styles. It was then proposed that Verdi should write an entire Requiem himself, and when the great Italian writer Manzoni died Verdi felt inspired to carry out such a sacred composition. Thus it was that the famous *Manzoni Requiem* came into being.

In 1869 the Khedive of Egypt commissioned Verdi to write an opera on an Egyptian theme, to be produced at the opening of the magnificent Opera House built in Cairo. For this Verdi composed *Aida*, which was performed in 1871 and has retained its popularity up to the present time. This proved to be the beginning of the master's third period of style, for he now turned from the purely lyric style to one with far greater richness of orchestration.

In the same year that *Aida* was produced Verdi retired

## VERDI

---

to his estate of Sant' Agata, and gave his time chiefly to the management of his property. It was generally supposed that his career as a composer was ended, although from time to time it was rumoured that he was writing another opera. After a period of sixteen years Verdi proved the rumour true, and on February 5, 1887, when he was seventy-four years old, he brought out *Otello* at La Scala in Milan amid scenes of indescribable enthusiasm. In 1893 the musical world was again startled and overjoyed by the production of another Shakespearean opera, *Falstaff*, composed in his eightieth year.

In all, Verdi's operas number over thirty, most of them serious and all of them containing much beautiful music.

At Sant' Agata the composer lived a quiet and retired life. The estate was situated at a distance of about two miles from Busseto and was of great extent, consisting of a large park, farm, and stables. The residence was spacious. Verdi's bedroom was on the first floor—a large, light, airy, and luxuriously furnished room. Here stood a magnificent grand piano, and the composer would often rise in the night to jot down the themes which came to him in the silence of the midnight hours. It was in this room that *Don Carlos* was written. In one of the upper rooms there was reverently preserved the old spinet which Carlo Verdi had given to his little son, and which had been perilously near destruction with the child's hammer.

At the age of eighty-eight Giuseppe Verdi, one of the noblest of men as well as one of the greatest of composers, died in Milan, on January 27, 1901.

## XVI

### WILHELM RICHARD WAGNER

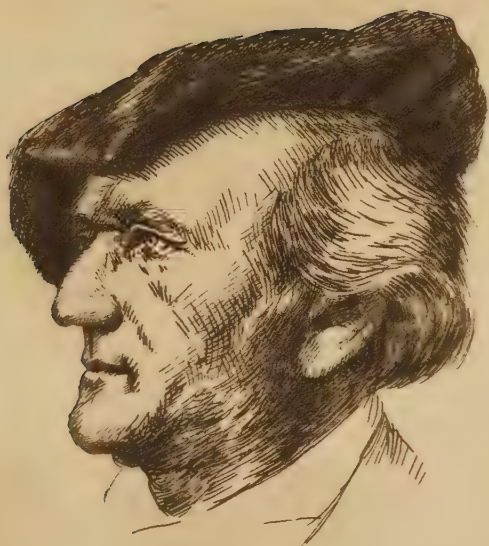
(1813-83)

**I**N the world of musical genius Wagner stands out as one of the greatest giants, and the story of his life reads almost like a fairy-tale. In the following pages only a brief account of his career can be given, but books innumerable have been written about the composer, and in his own autobiography and in his correspondence he has given us the most minute details of his life and inner emotions.

Wilhelm Richard Wagner was born on May 22, 1813, in Leipzig, where revolutions often threatened to break out in those troublous days. His father died when the babe was only six months old, leaving eight children besides Richard, the eldest of them being only fourteen. The mother was a sweet, gentle little woman who found herself quite unable to cope with the needs of her large family and on this account married again within a year of her first husband's death. Ludwig Geyer, the second husband, had been an old family friend, and was a man of much artistic talent—an actor, singer, author, and painter.

Shortly after the marriage Geyer secured a position in a Dresden theatre, and the family therefore moved to that city. The kindly stepfather was greatly interested in baby Richard and hoped that when he grew up he might become a portrait-painter, or a musician, for he heard the child play two tiny pieces of music on the piano. But he was destined never to see the blossoming of his youngest





*Richard Wagner*



stepson's genius, for he died on September 30, 1821, when Richard was only eight years old.

Even in his childhood little Richard showed wonderful promise. At the Kreuzschule, where his education began, he developed an ardent love for the Greek classics, and translated the first twelve books of the *Odyssey* out of school hours. He devoured all stories of mythology he could find, and soon began to create vast tragedies. Shakespeare attracted him greatly and he tried to write a play which was to combine the double tragedies of *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. He worked steadily at this play for two years, and when it was completed it was found that he had killed off forty-two persons in the course of the story, and that unless he brought them back as ghosts in the end there would be no characters left for the last act!

Everybody and everything connected with the theatre was of absorbing interest to this precocious child. Weber, who was now living in Dresden, frequently passed their house and was observed with almost religious awe by little Richard looking out of the window. Sometimes the great composer would call to have a chat with the mother, who was greatly liked among musicians and artists. Thus Weber became the idol of Richard's boyhood, and he knew *Der Freischütz* almost by heart. If he were not allowed to go to the theatre to listen to his favourite opera there were such scenes of weeping and such earnest entreaties that at last permission would be granted him to run off to the performance.

In 1827 the family returned to Leipzig, and at the famous Gewandhaus concerts the boy heard Beethoven's music for the first time. He was so fired by the Overture to *Egmont* that he decided at once to become a musician—but the question was how to do it. He knew nothing of composition, but he borrowed a treatise on harmony and tried to learn the whole contents in a week.

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

Richard had a fierce struggle with his self-imposed lessons on composition, and anyone less determined than the fourteen-year-old boy would have given up in despair. But he was made of valiant stuff. Working in solitude he composed a sonata, a quartet, and an aria, and at last he ventured to announce the result of his secret studies. His relatives naturally scoffed at the news, for they knew nothing of his preliminary studies and were well aware that he had never learned to play any instrument—not even the piano.

Although his family judged Richard's desire for music to be but a passing fancy they gave in to him sufficiently to engage a teacher for him. But the boy refused to learn slowly and systematically. His mind shot far ahead, absorbing in one instance the writings of Hoffmann, whose imaginative tales kept him in a continual state of nervous excitement. He was never content to climb mountains patiently—he tried always to reach the summits at a bound. It was with this ambitious spirit that he wrote overtures for orchestras before he had studied for many months. One of these was really performed in Leipzig, and it proved to be a marvellous affair with tympani explosions.

Richard now began to realize the need of solid work, and settled down to study music seriously. His master was now Theodor Weinlig, the cantor in the famous Thomasschule. In less than six months he was able to solve the most difficult problems in counterpoint. He learned to know Mozart's music and tried to write with more simplicity of style. A piano sonata, a polonaise for two players, and a fantasie for the piano were all composed within the year. After this he tried to arrange such famous works as Beethoven's Ninth Symphony for the piano. He then attempted the composition of a symphony of his own, and the finished work, which is said to have shown great musical vigour, was actually performed at the Gewandhaus.

## WAGNER

---

Instrumental music no longer satisfied this eager youth ; his ambition was now turned in the direction of opera. In order to study this branch of musical art he went to Würzburg, where his brother Albert was engaged at the theatre as actor, singer, and stage-manager. Albert secured for his brother the post of chorus-master with a salary of ten florins a month.

Richard, who was now twenty, set to work in earnest to compose operas. His first, called *The Marriage*, was found to be impracticable for performance, but the second attempt, entitled *The Fairies*, was produced many years later. The work was found to be imitative of Beethoven, Weber, and Marschner, but the music was very melodious indeed.

In 1834 Wagner returned to Leipzig. Soon there came another impetus to the budding genius : he heard for the first time the famous singer Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient, whose art made a deep impression upon him. Other influences too began to sway him at this time, for he was at the ardent and impressionable age of twenty-one. He read with great gusto the works of Wilhelm Heinse, who depicts pleasures both of the highest artistic form and of the lowest nature, and other authors who follow the same trend. The result was that the youth came to believe in the utmost freedom in politics, literature, and morals, and the pleasures of the moment seemed to him the highest good.

Under the sway of such disastrous opinions he began to sketch the plot of his next opera, *Liebesverbot* (Prohibition of Love), founded on Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. This was while he was on a summer holiday in Teplitz, and in the autumn he set to work on the opera steadily when he had taken a position as conductor of a small operatic theatre at Magdeburg. He greatly hoped that he would be able to induce the much-admired Schröder-Devrient to be his heroine.



## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

Wagner remained in Magdeburg for about two years and finished his opera there, but the performance for which he had laboured with such zeal was a complete failure. Soon afterward the theatre failed also, and the young composer lost his position. But his short sojourn in this town had an influence on the whole of his after-career, for it was in Magdeburg that he met Wilhelmina Planer, who was soon to become his wife.

Hearing that there was an opening at Königsberg for a musical director, Wagner travelled to that town and in due course secured the post. Minna Planer also found an engagement at the theatre, and the two were married on November 24, 1836. Minna was a kind, gentle, loving girl, somewhat younger than her twenty-three-year-old husband, and quite unable to realize that she had married a genius. She was almost as improvident as her husband, who was burdened with debts contracted in Magdeburg and increased in Königsberg, but she learned later from dire necessity how to be more careful and economical—which is more than can be said of the gifted young composer. Husband and wife were like two children playing at life—with fateful consequences. It has been said of Minna that it was indeed her misfortune that this gentle dove should have mismated with an eagle.

After a year spent at Königsberg the theatre there failed also, and once more Wagner had to seek employment. Through the influence of his friend Dorn he secured a directorship at Riga, where Minna was also engaged at the theatre. At first everything went well: the salary was higher, and the people among whom they were placed were very agreeable. But before long debts began to press again, and Wagner began to be dissatisfied with the state of the lyric drama as he found it, and he longed to try his fortune in Paris. He was only twenty-

## WAGNER

---

four, he had seen but little of the world, and the whole of his ambition was centred on the gay French capital.

His debts now became a serious menace to his happiness. He found that because of them he was unable to obtain a passport for Paris. But he was not to be turned from his purpose, and in company with Minna and their inseparable Newfoundland dog he slipped away from Riga at night in disguise. At the port of Pillau the trio embarked on a sailing vessel for Paris.

Wagner carried with him an opera and half of a second work, *Rienzi*, which he had written during the years of struggle in Magdeburg and Königsberg. In Riga he had come upon Heine's version of the legend of the Flying Dutchman, and the sea voyage he now undertook served to make the story more vivid. He wrote :

"This voyage I shall never forget as long as I live ; it lasted for three weeks and a half and was rich in mishaps. Thrice we endured the most violent storms, and once the captain had to put into a Norwegian haven. The passage among the crags of Norway made a wonderful impression on my fancy. The legends of the Flying Dutchman, as told by the sailors, were clothed with distinct and individual colour, heightened by the ocean adventures through which we passed."

After making a short stay in London the trio halted for several weeks in Boulogne because the great Meyerbeer was spending the summer at this seaside resort. Wagner confided his hopes and longings to the influential composer, who received the poor young German kindly and praised his music. He also gave him material help in the way of letters of introduction to several musicians of power in Paris, but he warned the young man that persistence was the most important factor in success.

With a light heart and with buoyant trust in the future, albeit with little money for present necessities,

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

Wagner and his companions arrived in Paris in September 1839. Could he have taken a glimpse into the next few years he would have seen that there lay before him many bitter hardships and privations; but "out of trials and tribulations are great spirits moulded."

There were many noted musicians in the French capital when Wagner arrived with his letters of introduction, and seemingly many opportunities for success. He received many promises of assistance from conductors and directors, and, delighted with his prospects, he plunged into "the heart of elegant and artistic Paris" without regarding the cost.

But soon the skies clouded, and one hope after another came to naught. His compositions were either too difficult for conductors to grasp or the theatres on which he depended for assistance failed. He was in great distress and could not even pay for the furniture for his rooms which he had bought on credit. To keep the wolf from the door he was obliged to turn to writing for the musical journals of the day, and in the meantime he continued to work on the score of *Rienzi*. This was finished in November 1840 and sent to Dresden, where it was produced in later years.

In the meantime the Wagners were starving in Paris. In one of Wagner's articles of this period, called "The End of a Musician in Paris," he made the poor musician die with the words: "I believe in God, Mozart, and Beethoven," and the article was almost applicable to the writer himself. At last the composer determined to turn his back on all the intrigues and hardships he had endured for over two years, and return to the Fatherland, which seemed the only desirable spot on earth.

The rehearsals for *Rienzi* began in Dresden in July 1842. Wagner had now finished *The Flying Dutchman* and had completed the outline of *Tannhäuser*, based on Hoffmann's story of the Singers' Contest at the Wart-

## WAGNER

---

burg. And now at last Wagner's star as a composer seemed to be in the ascendant.

On October 20, 1842, *Rienzi* was produced at Dresden Opera House—and next morning the young composer awoke to find himself famous. The new opera was a tremendous success with singers, public, and critics alike, but its performance had taken six whole hours, and Wagner decided that he must cut it down. All the singers loudly protested against this, assuring him that “the work was heavenly; not a measure could be spared.”

Wagner now spent a happy winter in the capital of Saxony, overjoyed at his success. He could have continued to write operas in the same strain as *Rienzi* to please the public, but he had higher aims. The idea that had been forming in his mind was to fuse the arts into one complete whole, making both vocal and instrumental music secondary to the dramatic plan. This at the time seemed a truly revolutionary idea, and he first illustrated it with *The Flying Dutchman*.

On January 2, 1843, *The Flying Dutchman* was produced at the Dresden Opera House with Madame Schröder-Devrient as Senta. But both critics and public were disappointed, for they had expected to see a brilliant and imposing spectacle like *Rienzi*. The following May and June the second opera was heard in Riga and Cassel, conducted by the famous violinist and conductor Spohr.

In spite of the fact that *The Flying Dutchman* was not a success, and that in Dresden it was so unpopular as to be put on one side for twenty years, Wagner was now given the post of head Kapellmeister at a salary of two hundred and fifty pounds. This post he retained for seven years, gaining a great deal of experience in orchestral conducting and producing Beethoven's symphonies with great originality. He also produced much of the best orchestral literature of the time.

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

*Tannhäuser* was now complete, and during the following summer at Marienbad he made sketches for *Lohengrin* and *Die Meistersinger*. During the winter, when he had finished the book, he began to compose the music of *Lohengrin*, and in the year 1848 the opera was ready. There was a wide difference in style between *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, and now he planned another work in *The Death of Siegfried*. He had written to Franz Liszt, with whom he had begun a correspondence, that within six months he would send him the complete book of the new composition, but as he worked at the drama it gradually developed until it finally grew into the four operas of *The Ring of the Nibelungs*.

The many letters which passed between Wagner and Liszt during their long friendship fill two large volumes, and clearly demonstrate how well Liszt understood the brilliant genius of the composer. He always stood ready to help him in financial difficulties, and Wagner came more and more to lean on the generosity of his friend. For it must not be imagined that Wagner had by now learned the lesson of carefulness in money matters or that with partial success he always had plenty to satisfy his needs. He had expensive tastes, loved fine clothing and beautiful surroundings, and as it cost him a great deal to produce new works he was constantly in debt.

What part Wagner played in the revolution of 1848 is not quite clear, although it is known that he wrote several articles which were radical protests for freedom of thought. At all events, he learned that it would be better for him to leave Dresden in time, and he fled from the country to remain in exile for over eleven years.

Arrived in Switzerland Wagner succeeded in scraping together the funds for Minna to follow him to Zurich, as he had been obliged to leave her in Dresden. He was full of plans for composing *Siegfried*, but his prudent wife



## WAGNER

---

begged him to write pleasing operas that Paris would like and thus add to their income. She knew that if he continued to compose according to his own inclinations they would have to live on the charity of their friends in the meantime, and she rebelled at this course. Wagner, however, believed that it was the duty of the world to take care of him while he wrote his great works, and he grew so heartily discouraged over the petty trials of his life that for five years his creative work was at a standstill.

The all-absorbing question for the exiles was now how to meet the daily necessities of existence. A kind friend who greatly admired Wagner's music, Otto Wesendonck, made it possible for him to rent at a low price a pretty *châlet* near Lake Zurich, and here the composer lived with Minna in retirement, during which he wrote many articles explaining his theories.

During the early years he spent at Zurich Wagner's only musical activity was to conduct a few orchestral concerts. Then one day, seized by a sudden impulse, he did what was unusual with his own works—took out the score of *Lohengrin* and read it through. He now felt a strong desire to have this opera brought out, and he sent it with a pleading letter to Liszt, begging him to produce the work. Liszt faithfully accomplished this task at Weimar, where he was conducting the Court Opera. The date chosen was Goethe's birthday, August 28, and the year was 1850. Much though he longed to be present Wagner dared not run the risk of venturing on German soil for fear of arrest. Eleven years after its first production Wagner heard his opera in Vienna for the first time. Liszt had been profoundly moved by the beauty of the work when it was performed at Weimar and wrote of it enthusiastically to the composer.

Wagner now set to work steadily at the Nibelung trilogy—that is, the three operas and the prologue.

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

Early in 1853 the poem was completed in its new form, and when he had sent a copy to Liszt in February his friend accepted it with the remark: "You are truly a wonderful man, and your Nibelung poem is surely the most incredible thing you have ever done!"

The inner flame of his creative fire impelled Wagner to work incessantly on the music of the great epic he had planned, and this he did in spite of grinding poverty and ill-health. He paid a brief visit to England to conduct some concerts for the London Philharmonic, but as soon as he had returned to Zurich he was hard at work again on *Die Walküre*—the first of the three operas, as *Das Rheingold* was considered to be the introduction.

By April 1856 the whole opera was finished and sent to Liszt for his opinion. Liszt and his friend, the Countess Wittgenstein, studied the work together, and both wrote glowing letters to the composer of the deep effect his music had upon them.

And now Wagner made an abrupt halt in the composition of these tremendous musical dramas. He realized that to produce such great works a special theatre should be built of adaptable design—but where could he find the money? As he had no ready solution to his difficulty he turned his attention to writing the stories of *Tristan* and *Parsifal*, which had suggested themselves while he was at work on *Die Walküre*. He wrote to Liszt: "As I have never in life felt the bliss of real love, I must erect a monument to the most beautiful of all my dreams." The first act of *Tristan und Isolde* was finished on the last day of the year 1857.

In his retreat in Switzerland Wagner longed for sympathetic and intellectual companionship, and poor Minna was too greatly troubled by the difficulties of making both ends meet to be able to supply more than a second-best comradeship. Wagner therefore sought and

## WAGNER

---

found intellectual friendship in the society of Marie Wesendonck, the wife of the kind friend and music-lover who had aided him in so many ways. This marked attention to another woman aroused Minna's jealousy, and an open break was imminent. The storm, however, blew over for a time.

In June 1858 Wagner was seized with a desire for luxury and quiet, and he therefore betook himself to Venice, where he wrote the second act of *Tristan*. Then trouble arose between the composer and the Wesendoncks, which caused Wagner to leave Zurich finally on August 17, 1859. Minna returned to Dresden, while Wagner went to Paris, and later on his wife joined him here for a time before their final separation.

In Paris what promised to be a wonderful stroke of luck came to him. His art was brought to the notice of the Emperor Napoleon III, who requested that one of his operas should be produced, promising to make himself responsible for whatever expenses he might incur. Now all might have gone well had Wagner's music been of the accepted pattern, but *Tannhäuser* was immensely different, while the composer was most exacting as to who sang and how it was to be performed. The rehearsals went badly, and at the first performance an opposing faction tried to drown the music. Matters were so much worse at the second performance that Wagner refused to allow it to proceed. In spite of the Emperor's promise he had been obliged to shoulder much of the expense himself, and he now left Paris heavily burdened with debt.

From Paris Wagner went to Vienna, where in 1861 he heard his *Lohengrin* for the first time. He had hoped to bring out *Tristan und Isolde*, but the music proved too difficult for the singers of the time to learn, and after many delays and disappointments he gave up his scheme in despair. Wagner was now financially at the lowest ebb,

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

and he planned to make a concert tour in order to earn his livelihood. At this time Minna left him for ever—she could no longer endure life with this “monster of genius.” She returned to her relatives in Leipzig, remaining with them until her death in 1866.

The concert tours extended over a couple of years, but except in Russia they produced little money. Wagner became despondent and was almost convinced that he ought to give up trying to compose. He was called a freak and a madman, and people ridiculed his efforts at music-making. And yet, in the midst of all this discouragement, he was at work on his one humorous opera, *Die Meistersinger*, toiling at it incessantly.

And now, when suffering and in dire need, help came to him as wonderfully as in any fairy-tale—a prince came to the rescue of the struggling genius. The young Prince of Bavaria had long worshipped Wagner’s music in secret, and one of his first acts on succeeding to the throne as King Ludwig of Bavaria was to send for the composer to come to his capital at once and finish his life-work in peace.

“He wants me to be with him always, to work, to rest, to produce my works,” wrote Wagner to a friend in Zurich, where he had been staying. “He will give me everything I need; I am to finish my *Nibelungen* and he will have them performed as I wish. All troubles are to be taken from me. I shall have everything that I need, if only I stay with him.”

Ludwig placed a pretty villa on Lake Starnberg, near Munich, at Wagner’s disposal, and there he spent the summer of 1864. The King’s own summer palace was quite near, and monarch and composer were much together. In the autumn a residence in the quiet part of Munich was set apart for Wagner, and Hans von Bülow was sent for as one of his conductors. Young Hans



## WAGNER

---

Richter was living in Munich at this time, and he later became one of the most distinguished conductors of Wagner's music.

The von Bülow family arrived in Munich in the early autumn, and almost at once the attraction began between Wagner and Cosima von Bülow. Liszt's daughter was but twenty-five, with a deeply artistic temperament, and could understand the aims of the composer as no other woman had ever done. This ardent attraction led later to Cosima's separation from her husband—and finally to her marriage with Wagner in 1870.

The first of the Wagner festivals under the royal patronage took place in Munich on June 10, 13, 19, and July 1, 1865. The work decided upon was *Tristan und Isolde*, perhaps the finest example of Wagner's genius, which was already eight years old. Von Bülow was a superb conductor, Ludwig an inspired Tristan, and Wagner felt supremely happy.

Such happiness was, however, too great to last. Enemies sprang up on all sides. The King himself could not stem the tide of false rumours, and he besought the composer to leave Munich for a while until public opinion had died down. So Wagner returned to his much-loved Switzerland, settling in Tribschen, near Lucerne, where he remained until he removed to Bayreuth in 1872.

In 1866 the feeling against Wagner had somewhat declined, and the King decided to have model performances of *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* at Munich. The festival began on June 11, 1867, and in the following year *Die Meistersinger* was performed on June 1.

And now the King was eager to hear the *Ring*. Although it was not yet completed the monarch refused to wait, and he ordered that *Das Rheingold*, the introduction to the trilogy, should be prepared. It was poorly given and quite unsatisfactory. Not at all discouraged by this,



## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

he asked for the performance of *Die Walküre*, and this was performed in the following year, June 26, 1870.

It had long been Wagner's greatest desire to have a theatre built in which his creations could be given correctly under his own direction. Bayreuth was the place he had decided upon as a quiet spot where music-lovers could come for the sole purpose of hearing his compositions, and here he went to live in April 1872. Two years later he moved into the Villa Wahnfried, which had been built according to the composer's own ideas. Meanwhile funds were being raised through the Wagner Societies to erect the Festival Theatre, and on May 22, 1872—Wagner's fifty-ninth birthday—the corner-stone was laid. It was planned to give the first performance four years later.

The long-expected event took place in August 1876. The festival opened on August 13 with *Das Rheingold*; on the following night *Die Walküre* was heard; then came *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*, these last being heard for the first time. *The Ring of the Nibelungs*, on which the composer had laboured for a quarter of a century, now found a hearing at last, in the presence of royalty and before a most distinguished audience of musicians from all parts of the world.

Thus had one of Wagner's dreams been realized, and his new gospel of art was vindicated.

One musical drama remained to be written—this was *Parsifal*, his last. Failing health prevented the completion of the drama until 1882, but on July 26 of that year the first performance of this noble work was given, to be followed by fifteen more performances.

Wagner, with his wife Cosima and their son Siegfried, together with Liszt and other friends, now went to Italy, where they occupied the Vendramin Palace on the Grand Canal, Venice. Here for some months the com-

## WAGNER

---

poser lived quietly and comfortably, surrounded by those whom he loved. But his health continued to fail rapidly, and on February 13, 1883, he died in the Venetian palace.

Such was the end of one of the most astonishing musicians of all time. His vital influence, however, is felt more and more keenly as time goes on and the world grows more familiar with his music—for to know the works of Wagner is to admire them and to love them.

## XVII

### CÉSAR FRANCK

(1822-90)

THE beautiful character of César Franck shines through all the music he composed, endearing him to all who hear his works. Of him it has been said: "Franck is enamoured of gentleness and consolation; his music rolls into the soul in long waves, as on the slack of a moonlit tide. It is tenderness itself."

César Franck was born in Liège, Belgium, on December 10, 1822, at a period of musical awakening throughout the country. Chopin, Schumann, Liszt, and other musicians were beginning to show their precocious talents while César was still in the cradle.

The Francks claimed descent from a family of early Walloon painters of the same name, the first of these being Jérôme Franck, who was born in 1540. Thus the name Franck stood for artistic ideals for more than two and a half centuries, and César worthily carried on the tradition. Liège, his birthplace, was in the heart of the Walloon country, and was peculiarly French in outward appearance, as well as in language and sentiment, with its low hills covered with pines and beeches, its charming valleys, and wide plains golden with flowering broom.

César's father was a banker. He was a man of stern and autocratic nature, with many friends in both the artistic and musical worlds, and he decided before the boys were out of their childhood that both César and his brother should become professional musicians. Whatever their inclinations might have been it would have been

useless to argue with him about them, but in the case of César he could not have chosen a profession that would have delighted him more.

Before César was quite eleven years old his father took him on a musical tour throughout Belgium, and his reception made it seem as though a successful career as *virtuoso* awaited him. Later events, however, proved that the quieter life of composing, teaching, and organ-playing was destined to be his. While on his tour César met another child artist, a girl who was his senior by a year or two—this was Pauline Garcia, who later became famous as Madame Pauline Viardot Garcia.

When César was twelve he had learned all that his masters could teach him at the Liége Conservatoire and had finished his studies there. His father, ambitious of the musical success of his sons, moved to Paris in 1836, and in the following year César gained admittance to the Paris Conservatoire. He joined Leborne's class in composition, and was a pupil of Zimmermann for the piano, and at the end of the year he gained a prize for the fugue he had written. For his examination test on the piano he chose Hummel's Concerto in A Minor and played it in splendid style. When the sight-reading test was given he suddenly elected to transpose the piece, selecting a third below the key in which it was written, and his playing was without slip or hesitation.

Such a feat as this was unheard of, and quite against the time-honoured rules of competition. And to think it had been performed by an audacious slip of a boy of fifteen! The aged director—who was none other than the Maestro Cherubini—was shocked and amazed at his temerity, and declared that it was impossible to award him the first prize, although he must have known that he deserved it. To make amends, however, he proposed a special award to the young pianist quite apart from those

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

given for the regular competition. This was the first time—and, so far as is known, the only time—that the “Grand Prize of Honour” has ever been awarded at the Conservatoire.

In 1839 César Franck won his second prize for fugue composition. It had become so easy and natural for him to write fugues that he was able to complete his task in a fraction of the time allotted by the examiners, and when he returned home several hours before the other students had finished his father reprimanded him severely. To his father's reproaches that he had not spent longer on the test on which so much depended the boy smiled quietly and answered that he thought the result would be satisfactory—and it was! In July 1840 he again won the first prize for a fugue.

In 1841, to the surprise of his examiners, he entered for the organ contest. Now the organ prizes have always been awarded on the results of four tests: first, the accompaniment of a plain chant chosen for the occasion; second, the performance of an organ piece with pedals; third, the improvising of a fugue; fourth, improvising a piece in sonata form. Both the improvisations were on themes set by the examiners, and when these were given to César he noticed at once that the two themes could be combined in such a way that one would set off the other. He set to work, and soon became so much absorbed in this interweaving of melodies that the improvisation extended to unaccustomed lengths. The examiners were bewildered, and decided that he was merely a tiresome boy, but when Benoist, the teacher of this ingenious pupil, had explained matters to them they awarded César a second prize for the organ.

He now began to prepare for the highest honour, the Prix de Rome. But here parental authority interfered, and for some unexplained reason his father compelled



## FRANCK

---

him to leave the Conservatoire before his session was over. It may have been that he desired to see his son a *virtuoso*, for he insisted that the boy should make the most of his talents as a performer, and he also made him compose certain pieces suitable for public playing. To this period of César's life, therefore, belong many of the compositions for pianoforte solos, his showy caprices, fantasies, and transcriptions. Since he was obliged to write this kind of music he sought for new forms in fingering and novel harmonic effects, even in his most insignificant productions. Thus there are to be found innovations which should attract the pianist and musician of to-day among his very early works, such as the Eclogue (*Op.* 3) and the Ballade (*Op.* 9).

Another reason presents itself for the sudden withdrawal of the boy from the Conservatoire. César, while still at this famous music school, had composed a set of three Trios (*Op.* 1), which his father wished him to dedicate to Leopold I, King of the Belgians, and afterward present them in person. However this may have been, the Franck family returned to Belgium for two years.

At the end of this time they again came to Paris, where apparently their only resources were those earned by the two young sons, Josef and César, by private teaching and concert engagements. And now began for César that life of regular and tireless industry, expressed in lesson-giving and composing, which lasted for nearly half a century.

One of the first works written after his return to Paris was a musical setting of the Biblical story of Ruth. The work was given in the concert-room of the Conservatoire, on January 4, 1846, when the youthful composer was twenty-three. The majority of the critics found little to praise in the music, declaring it to be but a poor imitation of *Le Désert* by David. One critic who was more kindly disposed than the others said: "M. César Franck is

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

exceedingly naïve, and this simplicity, we must confess, has served him well in the composition of his sacred Oratorio of *Ruth*." A quarter of a century later, when the second performance of *Ruth* was given, the same critic wrote: "It is a revelation! The score, which recalls by its charm and melodic simplicity Méhul's *Joseph*, but with more tenderness and modern feeling, is certainly a masterpiece."

But alas! hard times now came upon the Franck family. The rich pupils who formed the young men's chief *clientèle* all left Paris, alarmed by the forebodings of the revolution of 1848. And just at this inopportune moment César decided to marry! For some time the composer had been deeply in love with a young actress, the daughter of a well-known *tragédienne*, Madame Desmousseaux. His parents strongly objected to his bringing anyone connected with the stage into the family, but their opposition could not influence his love. The marriage of the young couple took place on February 22, 1848, in the very thick of the revolution, at the church of Notre Dame de Lorette, where César was then organist. To reach the interior of the church for the ceremony the wedding party was obliged to climb a barricade, helped over by the insurgents, who were massed behind this particular fortification.

Soon after his wedding, unable to bear the constant reproaches of his father for his inability to supply him with funds, Franck decided that he must set up a home of his own. Of course, he had now to work doubly hard, find new pupils for those he had lost, and give many more lessons. But in spite of all this extra labour he made a resolve, which he always kept sacredly, that he would reserve an hour or two each day for composition or for the study of such musical and literary works as would improve and elevate his mind. He never allowed anything

226

## FRANCK

---

to interfere with his resolution, and to it we owe all his great works.

Franck made his first attempt at a dramatic work with a libretto entitled *The Farmer's Man*, beginning it in December 1851, and completing it in 1853. As his day was devoted to teaching he was obliged to spend the greater part of the night on his composition, and he paid dearly for all his extra labour. He fell into a state of nervous prostration, and for some time was utterly unable to compose at all.

But the overclouded skies of the young musician's life brightened after a while. He had the great good fortune to secure the post of organist and choir-master in the fine new basilica of Sainte-Clotilde, which had lately been erected and contained a really magnificent organ. This wonderful instrument kept all its fullness of tone and freshness of timbre after fifty years of use. "If you only knew how I love it," Franck used sometimes to say to the *curé* of Sainte-Clotilde; "it is so responsive beneath my fingers and so obedient to all my thoughts."

Of Franck at the organ one of his most famous and gifted pupils writes: "Here, in the dusk of this organ-loft, which I can never think of without emotion, he spent the best part of his life. Here he came every Sunday and feast-day—and, toward the end of his life, every Friday morning too, fanning the fire of his genius by pouring out his spirit in wonderful improvisations, which were often far more lofty in thought than many skilfully elaborated compositions. And here, too, he must have conceived the sublime melodies which afterward formed the groundwork of his *Béatitudes*. . . .

"Ah, we knew it well, we who were his pupils, the way up that thrice-blessed organ-loft, a way as steep and difficult as that which the Gospel tells us leads to Paradise. But when we at last reached the little organ-chamber all

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

was forgotten in the contemplation of that rapt profile, the intellectual brow, while beneath the fingers of the master there flowed seemingly without effort a stream of inspired melody and subtle, exquisite harmonies."

César Franck was truly the genius of improvisation, and it is said that none of the most renowned modern organists could compare with him in this respect. And his improvisations were always thoughtful and full of feeling, whether he played for the church service, for his pupils, or for some chosen musical guest. It was with him a matter of conscience to do his best always—"and his best was a sane, noble, sublime art."

For the next ten years Franck led the busy but retired life of a teacher and organist; during this time his compositions were organ pieces and church music. But a richer inner life was the outgrowth of this period of calm, which was to blossom into new, deeper, and more profoundly beautiful compositions.

*Les Béatitudes* was one of these new works. For some years he had longed to compose a religious work on the Sermon on the Mount, and in 1869 he set to work on the poem. When that was well under way he began to create the musical setting with great ardour.

While he was in the very midst of this absorbing work the Franco-Prussian War broke out, and he lost many of his pupils owing to their compulsory military service. But early in 1872 he received an appointment which he greatly appreciated, that of professor of the organ at the Conservatoire. In the same year he also wrote and completed his oratorio of *La Rédemption*.

He now devoted a further six years to the perfecting of *Les Béatitudes*, which thus became the labour of love of ten whole years. A tardy recognition of his genius by the Government gave him the purple ribbon of an Officier d'Académie, and five or six years afterward

## FRANCK

---

he received the ribbon of a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour.

Franck's pupils were so greatly devoted to him for his never-failing kindness, sympathy, and tenderness toward them that he was always known among them as "Father Franck" or "Pater Seraphicus." On the occasion of his becoming a Chevalier they raised a fund between them to cover the expenses of a concert devoted entirely to the master's compositions. The works chosen were the Symphonic Poem, *Le Chasseur Maudit*, Symphonic Variations for the piano and orchestra, and the second part of *Ruth*. Padeloup conducted during the playing of the first part of the concert, while the composer himself conducted for the second, consisting of a March and Air de Ballet, with chorus, from *Hulda*, and the Third and Eighth *Béatitudes*.

The Franck Festival took place on January 30, 1887. It was, unfortunately, not a very inspiring performance, and some of his pupils expressed their disappointment that his works should not have been more worthily performed. But he only smiled on them and comforted them, saying: "No, no, you are too exacting, dear boys; for my part I am quite satisfied."

During the last years of his life César Franck produced some of his best works. Among them are the Violin Sonata composed for Eugène and Théophile Ysaye, the Symphony in D Minor, the String Quartet, two remarkable pianoforte pieces—the Prelude, Chorale, and Fugue, and the Prelude, Aria, and Finale—and, finally, his swan-song, the Three Chorales for the organ.

Overwork and an accident both contributed to shorten the days of the great composer. His health declined gradually, and he passed quietly away on November 8, 1890.

Chabrier, the brilliant orchestral composer, who survived



## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

Franck by only four years, ended his touching remarks at the graveside with these words :

“ Farewell, master, and take our thanks, for you have done well. In you we salute one of the greatest artists of the century the incomparable teacher whose wonderful work has produced a whole generation of forceful musicians and thinkers, armed at all points for hard-fought and prolonged conflicts. We salute, also, the upright and just man, so humane, so distinguished, whose counsel was sure, as his words were kind. Farewell ! ”

## XVIII

### JOHANNES BRAHMS

(1833-97)

IT has been truly said that it is impossible to compare one great composer with another, for each is a solitary star revolving in his own orbit. One cannot, for example, compare Wagner and Brahms: the former could not have written the German Requiem or the four Symphonies any more than Brahms could have written *Lohengrin* or *Tristan*. In the combination of arts which Wagner fused into a stupendous whole he stands without a rival; yet Brahms is also a mighty composer, the creator of music that seems continually to increase in beauty the more deeply it is studied.

Johannes Brahms was born on May 7, 1833, in a very poor quarter of the city of Hamburg. The dark and narrow streets contained tall, gabled houses which held as many families as possible. No. 60 Speckstrasse, where Johannes was born, stood in a dismal court, entered by a close, narrow passage. In the centre of the house was a steep wooden staircase with gates which were closed against marauders at night, and Johannes' parents lived on the first floor. They had only three rooms—a tiny kitchen, small living-room, and diminutive bedroom—nothing else. In this and in similar poverty-stricken surroundings the boy's early years were spent.

Jakob and Johanna Brahms, the parents of the future composer, were very musical, but also very poor in this world's goods. The father was a contra-bass player in the theatre, and often had to earn money by playing in dance-

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

halls and beer-gardens; later he became a member of the band that gave nightly concerts at the Alster Pavilion. The mother, who was much older than her husband, tried to help the family finances by keeping a little shop where needles and thread were sold.

Little Johannes, or Hannes as he was called, was surrounded from his earliest years by a musical atmosphere, and from the first showed a great desire to study music. When he was seven years old—a pale and delicate-looking boy, with blue eyes and a mass of flaxen hair—his father took him to Otto Cossel to arrange for him to have pianoforte lessons.

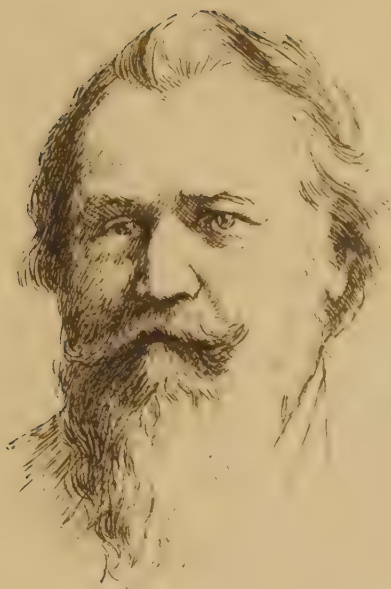
“Herr Cossel,” said Jakob Brahms, “I wish my son to become your pupil; he wants so much to learn to play the piano. When he can play as well as you do it will be enough.”

Hannes was docile, eager, and quick to learn. He had a wonderful memory and made very rapid progress. When he was only ten years old a concert was arranged for him, at which he played chamber music with several of the older musicians of Hamburg, and it was a success both financially and artistically.

Not long after this Cossel induced Eduard Marxsen, the distinguished master under whom he had himself studied, to take full charge of the boy's further musical training. Marxsen's interest in the boy's progress increased from week to week as he realized his talents.

“One day I gave him a composition of Weber's,” he once related, “and the next week he played it so blamelessly that I praised him. ‘I have also practised it in another way,’ he answered, and played me the right-hand part with the left hand.” Part of the work of the lessons was to transpose long pieces at sight; later on these transpositions included Bach's Preludes and Fugues.

Jakob Brahms, on account of his poor circumstances,



*Johannes Brahms*





was ready to exploit his son's gifts whenever occasion offered. He arranged for the boy to play in the band concerts in the Alster Pavilion, which are among the daily events of Hamburg's popular life, and the shillings he thus earned greatly helped out the family's scanty means. But the late hours began to tell on Johannes' health, and the father grew anxious about him. He begged a friend of his who was a wealthy patron of music to take the lad to his country house for a time, promising that in return the boy would play the piano to him at any time that he desired and that he would also give music lessons to the young daughter of the family, a girl of about the boy's own age.

Thus it happened that, early in May 1845, Hannes knew for the first time the joys of country life. He used to rise at four o'clock every morning and begin his day with a bathe in the river. When he had finished any musical tasks after breakfast the kind mistress of the household used to send him out, telling him not to show himself until dinner-time. The little girl, Lieschen, would then join him and they would spend some time rambling about the fields, looking for birds' nests, chasing butterflies, and picking wild flowers. The boy's pale cheeks soon became plump and ruddy with all this exercise, fresh air, and good food. He continued to carry out his musical duties faithfully, and he had provided himself with a small dumb keyboard on which to exercise his fingers. All the summer, in the fields and woods, he regularly pursued the studies in theory and composition that he had begun with Marxsen.

When the holidays were over, and the family had returned to Hamburg, Lieschen used sometimes to visit Frau Brahms, and soon grew very fond of this hard-working woman. But it troubled the girl's tender little heart to see how dark and dreary was the tiny flat in which

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

the Brahms family lived, for even the living-room had but one small window looking into the cheerless courtyard. She suggested to the willing Hannes that she should bring some scarlet runners to plant in the court and thus to brighten it—but alas! when the children had done their part the wayward plants refused to grow.

Johannes had returned home much improved in health, and he was able to play in several small concerts with renewed vigour and feeling, his efforts commanding a certain amount of attention. The winter passed uneventfully, the days being spent in hard study and the nights in equally laborious work in playing for the local concerts. But the next summer again brought the country and happiness to him.

On this second holiday at Winsen Hannes found that he was becoming known as a musician, and he was often asked to play in the homes of the best families there. He was also asked to conduct a small chorus of women's voices, known as the Choral Society of Winsen, and he was expected to turn his theoretical studies to account by composing something for this choir. It was for them he produced his *ABC Song* for four parts, using the letters of the alphabet and concluding with the words sung slowly and *fortissimo*, "Winsen, eighteen hundred and forty-seven." The little piece was quite melodious, and has been a favourite with teachers from that day to this.

Up to this time Hannes had never heard an opera. During the summer, when Karl Formes, then of Vienna, was making a great stir in Hamburg, Lieschen begged her father to secure seats for herself and the young musician. Hannes was almost beside himself with delight when he heard this rendering of *The Marriage of Figaro*. "Lieschen, listen to the music!" he cried, over and over again; "there was never anything like it." The father, seeing the radiant happiness of the children, took them

to hear another opera, and this again gave them great joy.

But the delightful summer came to an end all too soon for Johannes, who had found many kind friends in Winsen. He was over fifteen now and well knew that he must make his way as a musician, both in order to help to support the family and to pay for the education of his brother Fritz, who was to become a pianist and teacher. A farewell party was given in his honour at Winsen ; music, speech-making, and good wishes for his future success and for a speedy return to Winsen filled the evening.

Johannes made his new start by giving a concert of his own, assisted by some Hamburg musicians, on September 21, 1848. The tickets for this concert cost but one mark, but when he announced a second concert, for April 1849, he felt justified in charging two marks for the price of admission. At the second concert he played the Beethoven *Waldstein Sonata* and the brilliant *Don Juan Fantasie*, two works which were then considered to be the final tests of piano virtuosity. Meanwhile the boy continued to compose unceasingly and to study under Marxsen.

The political revolution of 1848 was the cause of many refugees crowding into Hamburg on their way to America. One of these was the Hungarian Jewish violinist Eduard Reményi, whose real name was Hofmann. He was in no great haste to leave Hamburg in reality, and Johannes, engaged as accompanist at the house of a wealthy patron, met the violinist and was fascinated by his rendering of national Hungarian music. Reményi saw the advantage of having such a splendid accompanist, and before long the two began to play together very frequently. Then the violinist disappeared from Germany altogether for a space of four years. When he reappeared in Hamburg, in 1852, he suggested to Brahms that they might make a concert

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

tour together. Reményi was then twenty-two, while Brahms was nineteen.

The tour began at Winsen, and the next place visited was Celle. Here a curious incident occurred. The piano proved to be a half-tone below pitch, but Brahms was equal to the occasion: requesting Reményi to tune his violin a half-tone higher—thus making it a whole tone above the piano—he then, at sight, transposed the whole of the Beethoven sonata they were scheduled to play. It was really a great feat, but Brahms performed it as though it were an everyday affair.

At Lüneburg the concert was so well received that a second was shortly afterward given. Others followed at Hildesheim, Leipzig, Hanover, and then at Weimar, where Liszt and his circle of famous pupils were established. Here Brahms made the acquaintance of Raff, Klindworth, Mason, Prückner, and other well-known musicians.

By this time his relations with Reményi had become somewhat irksome and strained, and he decided to break off their connexion. One morning he suddenly left Weimar without any warning. Travelling to Göttingen, he immediately made a call on Josef Joachim, the reigning violinist of his time, an artist whom he had long wished to meet. Brahms walked in upon him unannounced, and the two at once became fast friends. It was a curious friendship, for the violinist had never known what it was to struggle—his life had been one long triumph, and success had greeted him from the outset; whereas Brahms had been reared in privation and obscurity and was as yet unknown. He was at this time a fresh-faced youth, with long, fair hair and earnest, deep blue eyes. Wüllner, the distinguished musician of Cologne, thus described him: "Brahms, at twenty, was a slender youth, with a veritable St John's head, from whose eyes shone energy and spirit."



## BRAHMS

---

In disposition Brahms was kindly and sincere, and when young he was merry and light of heart. A friend of his in Düsseldorf, where he travelled from Göttingen, thus described him at this period:

“He was a most unusual-looking young musician, hardly more than a boy, in his short summer coat, with his high-pitched voice and long, fair hair. Especially fine was his energetic, characteristic mouth, and his earnest, deep gaze. His constitution was thoroughly healthy; the most strenuous mental exercise hardly fatigued him, and he could go to sleep at any hour of the day he pleased. He was apt to be full of pranks, too. At the piano he dominated by his characteristic, powerful, and, when necessary, extraordinarily tender playing.”

While in Düsseldorf Brahms came under the notice of Schumann, who called him “the young eagle—one of the elect.” In his musical journal the great man praised the youth most highly and complemented his kindness by writing to Jakob Brahms in Hamburg a letter of glowing praise of his son’s compositions. This letter was much appreciated, naturally, in the Brahms household, and it brought good fortune to the young composer: Jakob forwarded it to his son Hannes, and its warm praise from the noted critic induced Breitkopf and Härtel to publish some of his works.

Brahms had already written two sonatas, a scherzo, and a sonata for piano and violin. The Sonata in C Major, now known as *Op. 1*, although it was not his first work, was the one in which he introduced himself to the public. As he himself said: “When one first shows oneself it is to the head and not to the heels that one wishes to draw attention.” At this time, too, he was busily engaged in writing his Sonata in F Minor (*Op. 5*), which is now so frequently heard in our modern concert-halls.

In Leipzig Brahms made his first appearance as pianist



## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

and composer at one of the David Quartet concerts, at which he played his Sonata in C Major and the Scherzo. The result of his immediate success was that he was readily able to secure a publisher for his Sonata in F Minor.

And now, after many months of travelling, playing in many towns, and meeting with many musicians and other distinguished people, Brahms turned his steps toward Hamburg, and was soon once more with his home people. It is easy to imagine the joy of his mother at their reunion, for he had always been the apple of her eye, and she had always been faithful to her promise to write him a letter once a week. But who could measure the pride and satisfaction of the father when his son returned as a real hero of the musical world?

The concert tour just completed was the bridge over which Johannes Brahms passed from youth to manhood. With the opening of the year 1854 he may be said to have entered the portals of a new life.

Brahms now betook himself to Hanover in order to be near his beloved friend Joachim. He at once plunged deeply into work and was soon absorbed in the composition of his Trio in B Major for the piano. Later Schumann and his charming wife, the brilliant pianist formerly known as Clara Wieck, came to Hanover for a short visit, and this was made the occasion for several concerts in which Brahms, Joachim, and Clara Schumann took part. Soon after this Schumann's health failed, and he was removed to a mental home. In sympathy for the sad time now to be faced by Clara Schumann, both young artists came to Düsseldorf in order to be near the wife of their adored master. By their encouragement they so greatly raised the spirits of Frau Clara that she was able to resume her musical activities despite her heavy trials.

When not occupied in the work of composing Brahms had been busy giving pianoforte lessons, but now his

## BRAHMS

---

friends advised him to try his fortune again as a concert pianist. He began this career anew by joining Frau Clara and Joachim in a concert at Danzig, where each played solos. Brahms' selection of pieces for the concert consisted of Bach's Chromatic Fantasie and several of his own manuscript pieces.

After this first attempt the young artist struck out for himself, and his playing was greatly appreciated both in Bremen and in Hamburg. He is said always to have felt nervous of playing in his home city, but all passed off well. He now settled down definitely in Hamburg, occasionally making a musical tour when necessary.

Robert Schumann rallied for a while from his severe malady, and hopes were held out for his ultimate recovery. Frau Clara, having her little family to support, resumed her concert-playing in good earnest, appearing with triumphant success in Vienna, London, and many other cities. When possible Brahms and Joachim accompanied her. Then Schumann's illness took an unfavourable turn, and when the end was near Brahms accompanied Frau Clara to Endenich, remaining with the master until he died. On July 31, 1856, on a pleasant summer evening, Schumann's mortal remains were laid to rest in the little cemetery of Bonn on the Rhine, the three chief mourners being Brahms—who carried a laurel wreath from the widow—Joachim, and Dietrich.

Frau Schumann returned to Düsseldorf the next day, accompanied by Brahms and Joachim. Together they set in order the papers left by the famous composer, and a little later Brahms and his sister Elise travelled to Switzerland with Frau Schumann. A number of weeks were spent here in rest and recuperation, and the widow gradually recovered her health and energy. By October the three musicians were ready to resume their ordinary routine again. Frau Clara began to practise for her concert

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

season, Joachim returned to his post in Hanover, and Brahms turned his face toward Hamburg. On his way to his home city Brahms stayed at various towns to give concerts and met with pronounced success.

The season of 1856 to 1857 was an uneventful one for Brahms, who spent the time in composing, teaching, and in making occasional journeys. At this period he might have been said to have had four homes besides that of his parental roof in Hamburg, for in Düsseldorf, Hanover, Göttingen, and Bonn he had many friends and was always made warmly welcome.

It may be asked why Brahms, who was of such a tender and homely disposition, and who had the faculty of endearing himself so greatly to his friends, was never married. The only explanation that can be given is that he found in his art the greatest love of his life. From this devotion of his to creative art he never swerved for an instant, accepting for its sake poverty, disappointment, loneliness, and often failure in the eyes of the world.

In 1854 Brahms was engaged as conductor of a choral society in Detmold, and also as Court pianist and teacher in the royal family. The post carried with it free rooms and living, and he was housed at the Hotel Stadt Frankfurt, exactly opposite the castle, and thus very close to the scene of his new labours.

Brahms began his duties by performing many of the short choral works of the older and modern masters; with other musicians at Court much chamber music was performed—in fact, almost the entire *répertoire*. The young musician soon became a general favourite at Court, not only on account of his musical genius, but also because of the general culture of his mind. He could talk on almost any subject, and one of his frequent sayings was: "Whoever wishes to play well must not only practise a great deal, but read many books."

## BRAHMS

---

Brahms' friends used often to meet in his rooms at night, when they would all revel in music. "And how Brahms loved the great masters!" said one of his companions; "how he played Haydn and Mozart! With what beauty of interpretation and delicate shading of tone. And then his transposing!" Indeed, he used to take up any new composition and play it in any key with the greatest of ease and without any mistake. His score-reading was marvellous. Bach, Handel, Mozart, Haydn—all seemed to flow naturally from under his fingers.

When the composer accepted the post at Detmold he was engaged for a definite period of years, but his presence was required there for only part of the year. The other half he spent in Hamburg, where he resumed his activities of composing and teaching. The summer after his first season in Detmold was spent at Göttingen with some of his close friends: Clara Schumann was there with her children, and the young man was almost a son to this accomplished woman. He was a famous playfellow for her children, too, and about this time he wrote a book of charming children's folk-songs, which he dedicated to the children of Robert and Clara Schumann. He occupied all his leisure time with his Piano Concerto in D Minor. His method of working was somewhat like Beethoven's, for he put down his ideas in notebooks as they occurred to him, and later on he formed the habit of keeping several compositions in process of formation at the same time.

This period completed the prelude to Brahms' artistic life, and it was followed by a time of quiet study and inward growth. Then succeeded a deeper activity. It opened early in the year 1859, when the young musician travelled to Hanover and Leipzig, bringing out his Concerto in D Minor. He performed it at Hanover with Joachim conducting the orchestra. It was said that the work "with all its serious striving, its rejection of the



## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

trivial, its skilled instrumentation, seemed difficult to understand; but the pianist was considered not merely a *virtuoso*, but a great artist of piano-playing."

The composer now hastened to Leipzig, as he was to play with the famous Gewandhaus orchestra, and he greatly wondered how the second city would receive this new and serious music he had created. The day after the concert he wrote to Joachim that he had made a brilliant and decided failure. However, he was not one whit discouraged by this apathy of the public, and he wrote: "The Concerto will please some day, when I have made some improvements, and a second will sound quite different."

It has taken more than half a century to establish the popularity of the Concerto, but it still steadily gains in favour. The author of this book heard the composer play the Concerto in Berlin toward the end of his life, and he created a powerful impression by his vivid interpretation, although his technique was not of the *virtuoso* type. He made an unforgettable figure as he sat at the piano, with his long hair and his beard both turning to grey.

After this short tour Brahms returned to his teaching and composing in Hamburg. He played his Concerto there on a famous occasion, however, when Joachim was a soloist in Spohr's *Gesangscene*, and Stockhausen sang in a magnificent aria. The Concerto achieved a considerable amount of success at last, and the young composer, who had appeared at the performance calm and self-controlled, was content with its reception.

In the autumn of 1859 Brahms paid his third visit to Detmold, and found himself socially as well as musically the fashion. Pupils flocked to him for lessons, and in any assemblage his presence gave distinction. But the young man did not wish to waste his time in attending social functions, and to show his disapproval he would sometimes



## BRAHMS

---

remain silent for the whole evening, or else say such sharp and bitter things that his hosts would regret having asked him to their houses. His relations with the Court family, however, remained very pleasant, although he began to chafe at the constant demands made on his time and the rigid etiquette of the little Court. The following season he definitely declined the invitation to revisit Detmold, giving as his reason the fact that he had not the time to spare as he was supervising the publication of a number of his works. He had now become interested in writing for the voice, and had already composed a number of beautiful vocal songs and part-songs.

During the season of 1861 Frau Schumann, Joachim, and Stockhausen came frequently to Hamburg, and all three made a great deal of Brahms. They gave concerts together, and the composer took part in a performance of Schumann's beautiful *Andante and Variations* for two pianos, while Stockhausen gave an exquisite rendering of Beethoven's *Love Songs* accompanied by Brahms.

On one occasion Brahms played his *Variations* on a Handel theme, and of this a listener wrote that it was "another magnificent work, splendidly long, the stream of ideas flowing inexhaustibly. It was wonderfully played by the composer—it seemed like a miracle. The composition is so difficult that none but a great artist can attempt it." In these days all the best artists of the time perform this work, but in 1861 it was considered to be more ambitious than it would be to-day. At each of her three appearances in Hamburg during the autumn of that year Frau Schumann performed one of Brahms' larger compositions, and one of these was the *Handel Variations*.

Brahms had for long had a great desire to see Vienna, the home of so many great musicians, but he felt that when the time was ripe an opportunity would present itself. It came when he was twenty-nine, and early in

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

September 1862 he wrote to a friend: "I am leaving on Monday, the 8th, for Vienna, and I am looking forward to it like a child."

Brahms felt at home in the Austrian capital from the outset, and was very soon one of the outstanding musicians of the city. On November 16 he played with the Helmesberger Quartet at his first concert, before a crowded house. It was a decided triumph for "Schumann's young prophet." Although concert-giving was distasteful to him he appeared again on December 20; in the following year, 1863, he gave a performance on January 6, when he played Bach's Chromatic Fantasie, Beethoven's Variations in C Minor, his own Sonata (*Op.* 5), and Schumann's Sonata (*Op.* 11).

Brahms returned home in May, and shortly afterward was offered the post of conductor of the Singakademie, which had just become vacant. He had many plans for the summer, but he relinquished them all, sent in his acceptance, and at the end of August he was again in Vienna.

Now followed some years of a busy musical life. Brahms made his headquarters in Vienna, and while there he composed a great deal. Among the works of this time are the wonderful Piano Quintet, the German Requiem, the *Cantata Rinaldo*, and many beautiful songs. Every now and then he would undertake concert tours, and would often combine with other artists in giving performances of his compositions. A series of three concerts in February and March 1869, given by Brahms and Stockhausen in Vienna, was phenomenally successful, the tickets being sold as soon as the concerts were announced. The same series was equally well received in Budapest.

Early in the year 1872, when Brahms was nearly forty, he went into residence in the historic rooms on the third floor of No. 4 Karlsgasse, Vienna, which were to remain

to the end of his life as the nearest approach to a home of his own. His flat consisted of three small rooms, the largest of which contained his grand piano, writing-table, and a sofa with another table in front of it. At this time, to judge his appearance from his pictures, he was still almost as young-looking as he had been when twenty. It was probably his clean-shaven face that gave him this youthful look, and it was not until about 1880 that he grew the long, heavy beard which gave his face such a venerable appearance.

Two years after his final installation in Vienna he led a life full of varied excitement, conducting his works in places so far afield as North Germany, the Rhine Provinces, and Switzerland.

In 1876 his tour in Holland brought Brahms real joy. Everywhere he went he was received with great honour. He conducted his own works and played his Concerto in D Minor in Utrecht and other cities. But the greatest event of this year was for Brahms the appearance of his First Symphony. It was performed for the first time from manuscript in Karlsruhe, and later on in many other cities. Of this work Hanslick, the noted critic, wrote: "Brahms' close affinity with Beethoven must become clear to every musician who has not already perceived it."

During the years that followed, Brahms, with unwearied energy, added one after another to his list in every branch of serious music—songs, vocal duets, choral and instrumental works. In the summer of 1877 came the Second Symphony, and in 1879 appeared the great Violin Concerto, which is now acclaimed as one of the few masterpieces for that instrument. It was performed by Joachim at the Gewandhaus, Leipzig, early in the year. Already four Sonatas for the piano and violin had appeared, and in 1880 Brahms wrote his Sonata in G, the Rhapsodies (*Op.* 79), and the third and fourth books of Hungarian

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

Dances as duets. He now wrote a new Piano Concerto in B Flat, which he played in Stuttgart for the first time on November 22, 1881. In 1883 appeared the Third Symphony, which revealed him at the zenith of his powers—this work celebrated his fiftieth birthday. The Fourth Symphony was completed during the summer of 1885, and the Gipsy Songs came later.

From 1889 onward Brahms chose for his summer sojourn the town of Ischl in the Salzkammergut. The pretty cottage where he stayed was on the outskirts of the town near the rushing River Traun, and his dining-place was at the *Keller* (cellar) of the Hotel Elisabeth, which was reached by a flight of descending steps. In this quiet country, among mountains, valleys, and streams, he could compose at ease and also visit his friends at the end of the day.

In 1890 a visit to Italy in the spring-time afforded rest, refreshment, and many pleasant incidents.

The Four Serious Songs were published in the summer of 1896. In the same year Brahms had a severe blow in the death of Clara Schumann. This noble and accomplished woman had died in Frankfort, but her remains were taken to Bonn, and in the presence of Brahms and many other musicians and well-known people were laid to rest in her husband's grave there on May 24.

Brahms was profoundly shaken by her loss. He had hardly been in Ischl for a fortnight when he had received the news of her death, and now the whole of his imagination seemed to be coloured by the thoughts of mortality. He spent his summer in Ischl as usual, but many of the compositions he then wrote—such as the Eleven Choral Preludes—took death for their subject.

In the autumn of 1896 Brahms went to Karlsbad for the cure—and indeed he greatly required it. He had become very thin, walked with a faltering step, and had

## BRAHMS

---

completely lost his usual fresh complexion. At the end of six weeks he returned to Vienna, but he was not greatly improved in health.

Throughout the winter of that year Brahms greatly felt the need of close friends, and he spent as much of his time as possible with the Fellingiers and other acquaintances. His Christmas Eve passed happily in their company, and he dined with them on Christmas Day itself. His health, however, was rapidly sinking, and it was touching to note his great gentleness and his gratitude for every little attention during the last few months of his life. Every evening he would sit at the piano and improvise for half an hour, and when fatigue overcame him he would remain looking out of the window and dreaming till long after darkness had fallen. Gradually he grew weaker, and at last his spirit found release on April 3, 1897.

The city of Vienna, wishing to do honour to the great composer who had made it his dwelling-place for thirty-five years, made an offer to his relatives of the site of a grave where Brahms might lie. It thus came about that his last wish was granted, and he found a resting-place near Beethoven and Mozart, the two masters whom he had so greatly loved. Later, memorial tablets were placed above the doors of the house of his birth in Hamburg, and his residences in Vienna, Ischl, and Thun.



## XIX

### EDVARD HAGERUP GRIEG

(1843-1907)

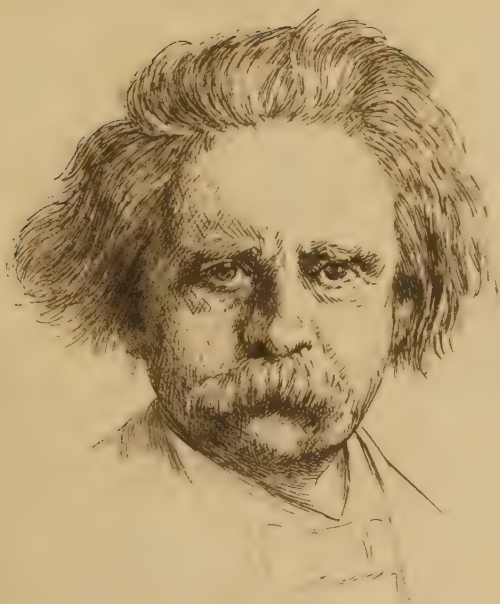
**E**DVARD HAGERUP GRIEG, the "Chopin of the North," was a unique personality as well as an exceptional musician and composer. To quote his biographer, Henry T. Finck:

"From every point of view Grieg is one of the most original geniuses in the musical world of the present or past. His songs are a mine of melody, surpassed in wealth only by Schubert, and that only because there are more of Schubert's. In originality of harmony and modulation he has only six equals—Bach, Schubert, Chopin, Schumann, Wagner, and Liszt. In rhythmic invention and combination he is inexhaustible, and as orchestrator he ranks among the most fascinating."

Of remote Scottish descent, the Griegs having taken refuge in Norway during the Jacobite rebellions, Edvard was born in Bergen on June 15, 1843. He was one of five children, and his mother was a fine musician and singer who appeared on concert platforms long after her marriage.

Little Edvard was not a wonder-child in the same sense that Mozart, Chopin, and Liszt were, but he very early showed that he had inherited his mother's gift for music. He had vivid recollections in after years of the rhythmic animation and spirit with which his mother used to play the works of Weber, who was one of her favourite composers, to her children.

To the small boy the piano was a world of mystery which he was anxious to explore. His tiny fingers tested



*Erhard*



the white keys to find out what sounds they gave individually, and when he discovered two notes that together formed an interval of a third he was greatly delighted. Then he found that three keys as a triad were better still, and when he could grasp a chord of four or five tones with both hands he was overjoyed. In the meantime he heard much music from the hands of more experienced performers, for his mother practised daily and entertained her musical friends at weekly *soirées*. At these the best classics were played with zeal and true feeling, while little Edvard listened and absorbed the music in his soul.

When Edvard was six years old his mother gave him his first real lessons on the piano. She was a strict teacher who would permit no dreaming, and the child found he was no longer to be allowed to idle his time away at this fascinating instrument. As he wrote later: "Only too soon it became clear to me that I had to practise just what was unpleasant. Had I not inherited my mother's irrepressible energy as well as her musical capacity, I should never have succeeded in passing from dreams to deeds."

But it was not long before the child's dreams were turned to account, for he soon tried to set down on paper the little melodies that haunted him. He is said to have begun to do this at the age of nine, and when he was twelve or thirteen he composed a set of variations for the piano on a German melody.

One day he brought his composition to school to show to one of the other pupils. The teacher caught sight of the juvenile attempt and reprimanded Edvard soundly for wasting his time in this way. Apparently the child was fond of dreaming away his hours in class just as he had done earlier at the piano, and he disliked the irksomeness of school life so greatly that he took every opportunity he could find to play truant. Poetry he loved, and he quickly learned by heart all the poems in his reading-books ;

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

he was fond, too, of declaiming them in season and out of season.

In his home life Edvard speedily became familiar with the names of great composers and their works. One of his greatest idols was Chopin, whose strangely beautiful harmonies were just beginning to be heard, although they were not yet fully appreciated. These must have influenced the boy's own efforts, for he always remained true to this ideal.

Another man whom he greatly admired was Ole Bull, the famous Norwegian violinist. One day in the summer, probably in 1858, when Edvard was about fifteen, this famous man rode up on horseback to the Griegs' home—they had lived for the past five years at the fine estate of Landaas, near Bergen. The great violinist, who had then just returned from America, was on a visit to his native town of Bergen; he came frequently to call on the family, and soon discovered Edvard's great desire to have a musical career. He coaxed the boy to improvise for him at the piano and to show him some of the little pieces he had already composed. There were consultations afterward with his father and mother, and then finally the violinist came to the boy and, gently stroking his cheek, announced: "You are to go to Leipzig and become a musician."

Edvard was overjoyed. It seemed too good to be true, too much like a fairy-tale, to think that he should gain his heart's desire so easily and naturally.

The Leipzig Conservatorium, which had been founded by Mendelssohn and later directed for a time by Schumann, was now in the hands of Moscheles, the distinguished pianist and conductor. At this time Richter and Hauptmann, with Papperitz, taught theory; Wenzel, Karl Reinecke, and Plaidy were responsible for the classes in pianoforte playing. Some of these masters later gained a



## GRIEG

---

reputation for being rather dry and pedantic. They were certainly far from understanding the romantic trend of the impressionable new pupil, trying to curb his originality and restrain it with rules and customs. The process was naturally very irksome to the boy, who wanted to follow his own methods.

Among his fellow-students at the Conservatorium were at least half a dozen who later made names for themselves, and who were even now making rapid progress in spite of the methods of their teachers. Some of these were Arthur Sullivan, Walter Bache, Franklin Taylor, Edward Dannreuther, and J. F. Barnett.

Edvard Grieg now began to realize that if he were ever to accomplish anything he must settle down to steady work. He at once plunged so deeply into his studies that he scarcely allowed himself time to eat or to sleep. The result of this was that he suffered a complete breakdown in the spring of 1860, a victim to several ailments. The most serious of these was incipient lung trouble, which finally deprived him of one lung and left him somewhat delicate for the rest of his life.

As soon as Grieg's mother heard of her son's illness she hurried to Leipzig and removed him to Bergen. There he was nursed back to health again, and his parents begged him to remain at home and give up his injurious studying. But the youth pleaded to be allowed to return to Leipzig, and once more he threw himself into his musical work with great zeal. In the spring of 1862, after a course of four years, he passed his examinations with credit. On this occasion he played some of his own compositions—the four which have been printed as *Op. 1*—and achieved success both as a composer and a pianist.

After spending the summer quietly at his parental home at Landaas, Edvard began preparations for coming musical activities. In the following season he gave his first concert

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

in Bergen, at which the piano pieces of *Op. 1*, Four Songs for Alto, and a string quartet were played. With the proceeds of this concert he bought orchestral and chamber music and began to study score, which he had not previously learned to do. In the spring of 1863, when he was barely twenty, he left home and took up his residence in Copenhagen, which was a much larger city than Bergen and therefore offered greater opportunities for an ambitious young musician. It was also the home of Niels W. Gade, the foremost Scandinavian composer.

Grieg was naturally anxious to meet Gade, and an opportunity soon occurred for this. Gade expressed a desire to see some of the youth's compositions and asked him if he had anything to show him. When Edvard modestly replied that he had nothing Gade retorted: "Then go home and write a symphony." This the young composer began obediently to do, but the work was never finished in this form—it later became *Two Symphonic Pieces for the Piano (Op. 14)*.

Two sources of inspiration now greatly influenced Grieg's life—Ole Bull and Rikard Nordraak. In 1864, six years after he had induced Edvard's parents to send the boy to Leipzig, Ole Bull was again staying in Bergen, and formed a more intimate friendship with the young composer. They frequently played together sonatas by Mendelssohn and other musicians, and occasionally they would play trios, with Edvard's brother, John, taking the 'cello parts. Ole Bull and Grieg both worshipped Nature in all her moods and aspects, and often they would wander together to their favourite haunts among mountains, fjords, or flower-clad valleys. Each would afterward endeavour to reproduce these endless influences, the one on his instrument, the other in his compositions.

Rikard Nordraak was a young Norwegian composer of great talent, who created a few excellent works in his brief

## GRIEG

---

career. He and Grieg met in the winter of 1864, were mutually attracted, and Nordraak visited his new friend in his home. Nordraak was intensely patriotic and wished to see the establishment of Norse music, and Grieg, who had been more or less influenced by German ideas since his Leipzig days, cast off his German fetters and placed himself on the side of Norwegian music. To prove his sincerity he composed the *Humoresken* (*Op.* 6) and dedicated them to Nordraak. From this time forward he felt free to do as he pleased in music, and to be himself.

In 1864 Grieg became engaged to his cousin, Nina Hagerup, a charming girl of nineteen, who had a lovely voice and for whom he wrote many of his finest songs. After a visit to Rome he returned to Christiania and decided to establish himself definitely in the Norwegian capital. In the autumn of 1866 his *fiancée* and Madame Normann Neruda, the violinist, assisted him in the giving of a concert composed entirely of Norwegian music and containing his Violin Sonata (*Op.* 8), *Humoresken* (*Op.* 6), and Piano Sonata (*Op.* 7). There were also two groups of songs by Nordraak and Kjerulf.

The concert was applauded by Press and public alike, and the young composer's position seemed assured. He secured the appointment of conductor of the Philharmonic Society, and was quite the vogue as a teacher. In June 1867 he felt that he could now afford to marry, and after his wedding with Nina Hagerup the young couple remained in Christiania for eight years.

About this time Grieg passed through a phase of discouragement and sorrows. His great friend and ally, Nordraak, had died in 1866, and in 1869 his baby daughter, aged thirteen months—the only child he ever had—was also taken from him. He drew many attacks upon himself by rival musicians for his war on "amateurish mediocrity," and this jealousy was very hard to bear. But

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

in spite of this he composed a great deal of music during this period, songs, piano pieces, and his splendid Concerto following one another in quick succession.

Another satisfaction to Grieg was the reception of a most sympathetic and cordial letter from Liszt on his first hearing Grieg's Sonata for the Violin and Piano (*Op.* 8), which he praised in high terms. He also invited Grieg to visit him in order that they might become better acquainted. This unsolicited appreciation from the famous Liszt was a great honour for the young composer, and was the means of inducing the Norwegian Government to grant him an annuity. In the following year, as the result of the help he thus received, he was enabled to go to Rome and meet Liszt personally.

Grieg set out for Italy in October 1869, and his first meeting with Liszt took place at a monastery near the Roman Forum where the great composer stayed when in Rome. Grieg wrote thus to his parents of their encounter :

"I took with me my last violin sonata, the Funeral March on the death of Nordraak, and a volume of songs. I need not have been anxious, for Liszt was kindness itself. He came smiling toward me, and said in the most genial manner: 'We have had some little correspondence, haven't we?'

"I told him it was thanks to his letters that I was now here. He eyed somewhat hungrily the package under my arm, his long, spider-like fingers approaching it in such an alarming manner that I thought it advisable to open at once. He turned over the leaves, reading through the Sonata. He had now become interested, but my courage dropped to zero when he asked me to play the Sonata, but there was no help for it.

"So I began to play on his splendid American Chickering Grand. At the very beginning, where the violin breaks in, he exclaimed: 'How bold that is! Look here,



## GRIEG

---

I like that; once more, please.' And where the violin again comes in *adagio* he played the part on the upper octaves with an expression so beautiful, so marvellously true and singing, that it made me smile inwardly. My spirits rose because of his lavish approval, which did me good. After the first movement I asked his permission to play a solo, and chose the Minuet from the Humoresken."

At this point Grieg was brave enough to ask Liszt to play for him, and this the master did superbly. Grieg's letter continued:

"When this was over Liszt said jauntily: 'Now let us go on with the Sonata,' to which I naturally retorted: 'No, thank you, not after this.'

"'Why not? Then give it to me, and I'll do it.' And what does Liszt do? He plays the whole thing from beginning to end, violin and piano parts—nay, more, for he plays it fuller and more broadly. He was literally over the whole piano at once, without missing a note. And how he did play! With grandeur, beauty, unique comprehension.

"Was not this geniality itself? No other great man I have met is like him. I played the Funeral March, which was also to his taste. Then after a little talk I took leave, with the consciousness of having spent two of the most interesting hours of my life."

The second meeting with Liszt took place soon after this. Of it Grieg wrote:

"I had fortunately received the manuscript of my Concerto from Leipzig and took it with me. A number of musicians were present. 'Will you play?' asked Liszt. I declined, for, as you know, I had never practised it. Liszt took the manuscript, went to the piano, and said to the assembled guests: 'Very well, then, I will show you that I also cannot.' Then he began. I admit that he took the first part too fast, but later on, when I had a chance to indicate the *tempo*, he played as only he can play. His



## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

demeanour is worth any price to see. Not content with playing, he at the same time converses, addressing a bright remark now to one, now to another of his guests, nodding from right to left, particularly when something pleases him. In the Adagio, and still more in the Finale, he reached a climax, both in playing and in the praise he bestowed.

“When all was over he handed me the manuscript, and said in a peculiarly cordial tone: ‘Keep steadily on; you have the ability, and—do not let them intimidate you!’”

“This final admonition was of tremendous importance to me; there was something in it like sanctification. When disappointment and bitterness are in store for me I shall recall his words, and the remembrance of that hour will have a wonderful power to uphold me in days of adversity.”

In the year 1874, when Grieg was a little over thirty, the Norwegian Government honoured him with an annuity of sixteen hundred crowns a year for life. Further good fortune was a request from the distinguished poet, Henrik Ibsen, to produce music for his drama of *Peer Gynt*.

With the help of the annuity Grieg was able to give up teaching and conducting and to devote himself entirely to composition. He left Christiania, where he and his wife had resided for eight years, and came back for a time to Bergen. Here he set to work on the congenial task of writing music for Ibsen’s drama, completing the score in the autumn of 1875.

The first performance of *Peer Gynt* was given on February 24, 1876, at Christiania. Grieg himself was not present, as he was then detained at Bergen. The play was received with great enthusiasm, largely on account of the original and charming music which accompanied it, and it was repeated thirty-six times in the season.

Grieg was a true lover of his country, passionately devoted to her mountains, fjords, valleys, and waterfalls.

## GRIEG

---

For several years he now chose to live at Lofthus, a tiny village situated on a branch of the Hardanger Fjord, a truly enchanting spot. His little retreat consisted of a single room, where he could work in perfect solitude, perched among the trees above the fjord with a dashing waterfall close by. No wonder that Grieg could write *The Butterfly*, *The Little Bird*, and *To the Spring* in such poetical vivid harmonies. He had only to look from his window and see the marvels of nature about him.

A few years later Grieg built a beautiful villa at Troldhaugen, not far from Bergen, where he spent the rest of his life. Some friends who visited the Griegs there in 1901 spoke of the ideal existence of the gifted pair. Grieg himself they described as very small and frail-looking, with a face as individual, as unique and attractive, as his music—the face of a thinker, a genius. His eyes were keen and blue; his hair, almost white now, was brushed backward like Liszt's. His hands were thin and small—wonderful hands that had the same touch on the piano as Paderewski's. Madame Grieg received her guests with a fascinating smile and won all hearts by her charming manner and pleasant appearance. She was small and plump, with short, wavy grey hair and dark blue eyes. Her sister, who resembled her closely, made up the remainder of the family. Grieg called her his "second wife," and they seemed to be a most united trio. At Troldhaugen also Grieg had his little work-cabin away from the house, down a steep path, among the trees of the garden, where he composed many of his unique pieces of music.

All who have heard Grieg play declare that his performance was most poetical and beautiful. It was never very powerful, one of his hands having been injured in an accident, but he always brought out the lyric parts most expressively and had a "wonderfully crisp and buoyant execution in rhythmical passages."

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

Grieg continued to play occasionally in different cities, and with increased frequency made visits to England, France, and Germany to make known his compositions. He was in England in the spring of 1888, and on May 3 the London Philharmonic gave almost an entire programme of Grieg music. He then acted in the threefold capacity of composer, conductor, and pianist. It was said by one of his critics: "Mr Grieg played his own Concerto in A Minor after his own manner; it was a revelation." Another wrote: "The Concerto is very beautiful. The dreamy charm of the opening movement, the long-drawn sweetness of the Adagio, the graceful, fairy music of the final Allegro—all this went straight to the hearts of the audience. Grieg as a conductor gave equal satisfaction. It is to be hoped that the greatest representative of 'old Norway' will come amongst us every year."

Grieg returned the following year and appeared at the Philharmonic again on March 14, 1889. The same critic then wrote:

"The hero of the evening was unquestionably Mr Grieg, the heroine being Madame Grieg, who sang in her own unique and most artistic fashion a selection of her husband's songs, he accompanying with great delicacy and poetic feeling. Grieg is so popular in London, both as composer and pianist, that when he gave his last concert people were waiting in the street before the doors from eleven in the morning, quite as in the old Rubinstein days."

In only a few cities—Christiania, Copenhagen, Leipzig, Rome, Paris, London, and Edinburgh—would the artist pair consent to give their unique piano and song recitals. They were indeed artistic events, and Madame Nina Grieg came in for her full share of admiration. While she was not a great singer, she is said to have had the captivating abandon, dramatic vivacity, and soulful treatment of her songs that were reminiscent of Jenny Lind.

## GRIEG

---

Her last public appearance was made in London in 1898.

Grieg's sixtieth birthday, June 15, 1903, was celebrated in the cities of Scandinavia, throughout Europe, and also in America, and he thus lived to see the recognition of his genius in many parts of the world.

Grieg constantly over-exerted his never robust strength, and on this subject he wrote to a friend in 1906: "Yes, at your age it is ever 'Hurrah, *vivat!*' At my age we say, '*Sempre diminuendo.*' And I can tell you it is not easy to make a beautiful *diminuendo.*"

Yet Grieg still gave concerts, saying that he had not the strength of character to refuse. Indeed, he had numerous invitations to go to America, which he refused because he felt he would not be able to face the long sea-voyage. Always cheerful, even vivacious, he retained his courage until the end of his life. Finally, however, at the end of August 1907, he was obliged to enter a hospital in Bergen, and on the night of September 3 his life slowly ebbed away in his sleep.

Grieg's burial-place is as romantic as his music. Near his old home there is a steep cliff, about fifty feet high, projecting into the fjord. Half-way up there is a natural grotto, which can be reached only by a small boat. In this spot, chosen by Grieg himself, the urn containing his ashes was deposited some weeks after the funeral. Then the grotto was closed, and a stone slab with the words "Edvard Grieg" cut upon it was cemented in the cliff.

The composer who through his music had endeared himself to the whole world was given a touching funeral at which only his own works were heard, chief of these being the Funeral March which he had composed for his friend Nordraak.

## XX

### PETER ILYITCH TSCHAIKOWSKY

(1840-93)

THE modern music-lover is an eager student of the works of the great Russian composers because of the new message they bring to their art. It cannot but be inspiring to listen to their music, with its rugged strength, vigorous life, and fascinating rhythms. It is entirely different from the music of other countries, and at once attracts by its unusual melodies and its richness of harmony.

Among the numerous composers of modern Russia the name of Peter Ilyitch Tschaikowsky stands out most prominently. He was born on April 28, 1840, in Votkinsk, where his father, who was a mining engineer, had been appointed inspector of the mines at Kamsko-Votkinsk. The father's position carried with it much luxury, a fine house, many servants, and an ample salary; thus the future young musician never had to face the poverty and privation incidental to the early days of so many gifted composers.

As a small child Peter Ilyitch had so affectionate and sympathetic a nature that he charmed every one with his pretty, loving ways; this pleasant disposition he retained throughout life. When he was less than five years old a new governess came into the family to teach his elder brother Nicholas and his cousin Lydia, and the influence she exerted over her young charges was extremely beneficial and healthful. She began to teach little Peter his letters, and the charming but careless child—he is said at this time to have been very untidy, with rumpled hair





G. Tschakovsky



and buttons usually missing from his clothes—soon developed an industrious spirit. For recreation he often preferred playing the piano, reading, or writing poetry to indulging in boisterous games with other children.

When Peter was eight years old the family moved to St Petersburg, and the two younger boys were sent to boarding-school. The parting from his mother—though he saw her once a week—nearly broke the child's sensitive heart, and the school proved to be quite unsuitable for such a highly strung boy, who needed the most tender maternal care. The work of the school was very heavy, and the hours were so long that often the students were obliged to sit over their books until far into the night.

Besides his school-work Peter took music lessons from the pianist Philipov and made very rapid progress. At this period of his life music of any kind would excite him abnormally; a hand-organ in the street would enchant him and an orchestra strangely agitate him. He seemed to live at a very high tension, and the strain on his nervous system produced frequent ailments which kept him out of school.

In 1849 his father secured another appointment as inspector of mines, but it was not so well paid as the former one. The family now moved to Alapiev, the little town where he was stationed, and endeavoured to revive the home life of their happy years in Votkinsk.

At Alapiev, however, nobody seemed to show any interest in Peter's progress in music. He was really making remarkable headway, for he had studied carefully in St Petersburg, and now he began to study a great deal by himself and often to improvise at the piano. His parents did nothing to further his musical education, but this was probably because they dreaded a return of the nervous disorders which their present quiet mode of living seemed to have cured.

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

From the fact that their father had held Government appointments Peter and his brothers were eligible for education at the School of Jurisprudence. Peter was therefore entered as a scholar at the age of ten, and completed his course when he was nineteen. During this period he attained maturity, and he sustained a deep loss in the death of his passionately adored mother, a handsome and very estimable woman.

While attending the Law School Peter had to leave music in the background. His family and friends had looked upon it only as a pleasant pastime at best, without having any serious significance, and the boy had therefore to keep his ambitions to himself. His old habits of irritability and discontent, which had been the result of overstrung nerves, had now given place to his natural frankness of character and charm of manner, attracting all who came in contact with him.

In 1859, when Peter had finished his studies at the School of Jurisprudence, he received an appointment as first-class clerk in the Ministry of Justice. This would have seemed to many young men a propitious beginning to his career, but it did not greatly impress Peter, who never seemed to take this Government work very seriously. During the three years in which he held his post he was a great frequenter of the opera and theatre, and many of the impressions he now received helped to mould his character and tastes in music. The opera of *Don Giovanni*, Mozart's masterpiece, greatly influenced him, as did the acting of Adelaide Ristori and the singing of Lagrona.

The new Conservatoire of Music was founded in St Petersburg in 1862, with Anton Rubinstein as director. Tschaikowsky was unable to resist the temptation of entering himself as a pupil, and he now began the serious study of composition and kindred subjects with Professor Zarembo. His progress was so rapid with the various

## TSCHAIKOWSKY

---

instruments he began to study—the piano, organ, and flute—that Rubinstein advised him to give up all thoughts of a legal career and make music his profession.

With the help of Rubinstein he secured some pupils and also various engagements as an accompanist, and thus was able to pursue his own studies without financial difficulty. He worked with great industry at composition in all his leisure time, and one of the smaller pieces he wrote was a Concert Overture in F, scored for a small orchestra. In 1865 he took his diploma as a musician, and also secured a silver medal for a cantata.

In 1866 the Conservatoire at Moscow was founded, with Nicholas Rubinstein at its head, and Tschaikowsky was offered the professorship of composition and musical history. The composer was at this time only twenty-six, and the offer was therefore a very flattering one, for many an older man would have been glad to have secured such a position. Tschaikowsky accepted the offer and immediately moved to Moscow, where he remained for at least twelve years teaching at the Conservatoire. During this period his fame as a composer grew steadily, and he made many friends for himself and for his art. One of these friends was the publisher Jurgenson, who played a somewhat important part in the young man's life by bringing out his various compositions.

During the first few years he spent in Moscow Tschaikowsky made his home with Nicholas Rubinstein, living with the utmost simplicity and economy. Later on, when he acquired a house for himself in the country, he never altered his plain style of living. Yet money never had any interest or value in his opinion. He would often toss his small change among groups of street-boys, and it is said that he once spent his last roubles in sending a cablegram to von Bülow in America to thank him for his admirable performance of his First Piano Concerto. His friends at



## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

first protested against his prodigality, but finally, finding their efforts useless, gave up in despair.

Soon after his appointment to the professorship in Moscow Tschaiowsky composed a Concert Overture in C Minor, but to his surprise and disappointment his new director disapproved of the work in every way. Like most composers, he was very sensitive to criticism and had a great dread of controversy. Rather than engage in any arguments on the subject he withdrew into himself, but he decided that he would try his next work in St Petersburg instead of in Moscow.

The composition which he now produced was a symphonic poem, *Winter Daydreams*, usually known as the First Symphony (*Op.* 13). He carried out his resolution of testing it in St Petersburg in 1866, but again without success. The two men whose good opinion he most desired, Anton Rubinstein and Professor Zaremba, could find nothing good in his latest work, and the composer returned to Moscow discomfited, but still prepared to tempt fate further with his works. Two years later he produced the *Winter Daydreams* Symphony in Moscow, where it was received with much applause, and its author was greatly encouraged by its appreciation.

In 1866 Tschaiowsky composed his first opera, *Voivoda*, which shows the influence of Mozart in its composition. It is a somewhat curious fact that Tschaiowsky, who was almost revolutionary in other forms of music, should go back to the eighteenth century for his ideal of an opera, but it is known that he greatly admired Mozart and cared little for Wagner, considering that his musical dramas were built on false principles.

Soon after its completion *Voivoda* was accepted for production at the Grand Theatre of Moscow. The libretto was written by Ostrowsky, one of the leading dramatists of the day, and the first performance took

## TSCHAIKOWSKY

---

place on January 30, 1869. Several more performances were given, and the opera achieved a considerable amount of popularity, but the author was so greatly disappointed with its failure to win a great artistic success that he burnt the score. His next composition, an orchestral fantasia entitled *Fatum*, suffered similarly at his hands, and the flames received also the score of a complete opera, *Undine*, finished in 1870 and refused by the Opera of St Petersburg.

The young Russian's next venture in the musical world was a fairy play with music, *The Snow Queen*. It was mounted and produced with great care, yet it failed to make a favourable impression. These disappointments, however, did not damp the composer's enthusiasm for work.

Tschaikowsky now turned his attention to chamber music, which up to this time he had neglected, feeling the lack of tone and variety in the strings. The first attempt at a string quartet resulted in the D Major Quartet (*Op.* 11), which was appreciated then as it is now for its rich colouring and characteristic rhythms. The Andante in this composition makes special appeal, and it is said to have been inspired by the singing of a labourer, morning after morning, who was working on the house below his window. The song had a haunting lilt, and Tschaikowsky wrote it down. Another string quartet, in F major, was written in 1874, and at once acclaimed by all who heard it—with the single exception of Anton Rubinstein.

Tschaikowsky wrote six symphonies in all. The second of these, the Symphony in C Minor, was composed in 1873, and the themes which he used in the first and last movements were gathered in Little Russia. The work was produced with great success in Moscow in the year in which it was written. The next orchestral composition was a symphonic poem called *The Tempest*, with a programme prepared by Stassow; both in Paris and in

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

Moscow, where it was produced simultaneously, it made a deep impression.

The splendid Piano Concerto in B Flat Minor (*Op.* 23), the first of three works of this kind, was Tschaikowsky's next attempt. It was dedicated to the composer's friend and former master, Nicholas Rubinstein, who had promised to play the piano part in it, but at a trial performance he began to criticize the work unmercifully, and ended by saying that it was quite unplayable and utterly unsuited to the piano. The composer, deeply hurt and offended, at once erased the name of Nicholas Rubinstein from the title-page and substituted the name of Hans von Bülow. Not long afterward von Bülow performed it with tremendous success in America, where he was on tour, and later on Nicholas Rubinstein made some tardy amends for his unkindness by giving a superb rendering of the Concerto in Moscow. It is curious to reflect on the short-sightedness of Rubinstein when we think of all the modern pianists from Carreño to Percy Grainger who have won acclaim in this temperamental and inspiring work.

Tschaikowsky was now thirty-five. Most of his time was given to the Conservatoire, where he often worked for nine hours a day, and he also contributed articles on music to two journals. He had written a book on harmony, composed numerous small pieces of music, and several large works such as his two Symphonies, two Operas, the Concerto, and the two String Quartets. To accomplish such an immense amount of work he must have possessed an immense amount of energy and devotion to his ideals.

One of the operas just mentioned was entitled *Vakoula the Smith*, and was dated 1874. It was at first offered in competition with other operas, and it was not only considered to be infinitely the best of them all, but it succeeded in carrying off both the first and second prizes. It

## TSCHAIKOWSKY

---

was splendidly mounted, and performed at the Marinsky Theatre in St Petersburg at least seventeen times.

In 1877, when Tschaikowsky was thirty-seven, he made an unfortunate marriage, of which little is known but that it brought untold suffering to the composer. About nine years earlier he had been engaged to the well-known singer Désirée Artôt, but for some reason or other the match was broken off. Doubtless Tschaikowsky inscribed in his diaries the history of his love affairs, for he kept a diary regularly, but unfortunately for us he destroyed them all a few years before his death. Of his marriage all that we can glean from his intimate friend, M. Kashkin, is that he was engaged to a lady, Antonina Ivanovna Milyukova, in the spring of 1877 and married her on July 18 of the same year. They must have been a most ill-assorted pair, for when the professors of the Conservatoire met in the autumn for their new session Tschaikowsky looked the picture of despair. A few weeks later he fled from Moscow, and when news was again heard of him he was lying dangerously ill in St Petersburg.

Rest for his overstrung nerves and a complete change of scenery were prescribed by the doctors, and his brother Modeste Ilyitch took him to Switzerland and afterward to Italy. The peaceful life and the entire change of surroundings greatly helped to restore him to his normal health, and on his return to Moscow in the following year he seemed to be quite his natural self again. His illness brought him a curious piece of good fortune, however, for a wealthy widow who greatly admired his music was prompted by his sad state of health to settle on him a generous yearly allowance for life. Madame von Meck's kindly gift thus made the composer independent, and he was able to devote his days to the production of his exquisite works.

A fever of energy and enthusiasm for work now took



## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

possession of Tschaikowsky. He began the composition of his new opera, *Eugene Onegin*, and completed his Fourth Symphony in F Minor. The score of the opera was finished in February 1878 and sent at once to Moscow, where the first performance was given in March 1879. In the beginning the opera met with only a mild popularity, but it gradually grew in favour until in five years' time it received an excellent reception in St Petersburg. It is thought to be his finest opera and shares with Glinka's *Life of the Tsar* the highest honours of this branch of musical art in Russia.

In 1881 Tschaikowsky was invited to compose an orchestral work for the consecration of the Temple of Christ in Moscow, and the solemn overture *1812* (*Op.* 49) was the outcome of this. Later in the year he completed the Second Piano Concerto. The Piano Trio in A Minor (*Op.* 50) dedicated "To the memory of a great artist" refers to his friend and former master, Nicholas Rubinstein, who died in Paris in 1881.

Tschaikowsky's opera *Mazeppa* was his next important work. In the same year the Second Orchestral Suite (*Op.* 53) and the Third Suite (*Op.* 55) followed. Two symphonic poems, *Manfred* and *Hamlet*, came next. The latter was written at the country house which he had been able to purchase with Madame von Meck's annuity, and to which he retired at the age of forty-five to lead a peaceful country life. This last home of the composer was the former old manor-house of Frovolo, on the outskirts of the town of Klin, near Moscow.

In January 1887 *Vakoula the Smith* appeared again under the guise of *Two Little Shoes*, the composer having rewritten a good part of it. He was invited to conduct his own work, but he shrank from doing this, as in two previous attempts he had made at conducting he had failed utterly. These had been in the early years of his



## TSCHAIKOWSKY

---

career, but his friends now urged him so greatly to conduct his opera that he unwillingly consented—and the result was a highly successful performance. Encouraged by this, he undertook a three months' tour through Western Europe in 1888, and on his return to Russia he conducted a programme of his own compositions for the Philharmonic Society. In spite of the intense nervousness from which he always suffered he never failed to score a triumph, and he accepted some of the offers that resulted from his success to conduct concerts in Hamburg, Dresden, Leipzig, Vienna, Copenhagen, and London.

In his country residence once more, Tschaikowsky composed his two beautiful ballets and his two greatest symphonies, the Fifth and Sixth. The Fifth Symphony was written in 1888 and published in the following year. On its first hearing it made very little impression, and it suffered from an almost complete neglect until Nikisch, with his unerring judgment, rescued it from oblivion, when the world discovered that it had been lacking in appreciation of one of the composer's greatest works.

In May 1891 Tschaikowsky visited America, conducting four concerts connected with the formal opening of Carnegie Hall, New York. His interesting personality made a deep impression on his audience as he stood before the orchestra conducting, while Adèle Aus der Ohe played his famous Concerto in B Flat Minor.

Tschaikowsky's two last operas, *Pique Dame* (Queen of Spades) (*Op.* 68) and *King René's Daughter*, are not considered to be in any way distinctive, although the former was performed with considerable interest at the Metropolitan in New York. The Third Piano Concerto (*Op.* 75) occupied the master during his last days at Frovollo, but it was left unfinished by him and completed by the composer Taneiev. The wonderful Sixth Symphony (*Op.* 74) is a superb example of Tschaikowsky's

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

genius. It was composed in 1893, and the score is dated August 31. After its first performance in St Petersburg the disappointed author entitled it *The Pathetic* from the coldness of its reception by the public. In this work the passion and despair which fill so many of the master's finest compositions rise to the highest tragic significance. The last movement, with its prophetic intimation of his coming death, is heartbreaking, and one cannot listen to its poignant phrases without deep emotion.

Tschaikowsky died in St Petersburg, a victim of cholera, on October 12, 1893.

## XXI

### EDWARD ALEXANDER MACDOWELL

(1861-1908)

**A**CCLAIMED as America's greatest composer, Edward Alexander MacDowell came of mixed Irish and Scottish ancestry, although both his father and mother were born in America. The composer himself was born at 220 Clinton Street, New York, on December 18, 1861, and was their third son.

Edward's father as a child had always had a great leaning toward art, but his Quaker parents had sternly repressed his longings to draw and paint. His artistic instincts seem, however, to have reappeared in Edward, who in addition had also a natural inclination toward music.

When Edward was about eight years old he was not considered to be by any means a prodigy, or even a precocious child, although he seemed to be very versatile and gifted in many ways. His little drawings showed the skill of a born artist, while he was very fond of inventing fairy-tales and writing short verses. He was also delighted to be able to pick out various tunes on the piano, and this led a family friend, a Mr Juan Buitrago of Bogota, to ask if he might teach him to play correctly. Mr Buitrago was so greatly interested in the boy and his proficiency that he continued to give him lessons for several years, during which time Edward began to improvise little themes on the piano. He was not, however, unlike any other boy in his dislike of the technical drudgery necessary before one can become a pianist.

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

Later on Edward was taken to a professional teacher, Paul Desvernine, with whom he remained until he was fifteen years old. He also received occasional lessons from the brilliant Venezuelan pianist, Teresa Carreño, who admired his gifts and afterward played his piano concertos.

Edward's family now realized that he was destined for a musical career, and in true American fashion decided that he ought to finish his studies in Europe. It was therefore arranged that he should go to the Conservatoire in Paris for a course in piano and theory of music. In April 1876 he left America for France, his mother accompanying him on the long journey.

Arrived in Paris, Edward passed the entrance examinations to the Conservatoire and began the autumn term as a pupil of Marmontel in piano and of Savard in theory and composition. His uncertain knowledge of the language was a great drawback to him, for he had considerable difficulty in following the theory class, although he could fairly easily understand his lessons on the piano. He was anxious to learn, however, and under a private tutor he soon became quite proficient in French.

The boy's love of drawing was still very great, and he would often indulge in making little sketches for his amusement. During one of his lesson hours at the Conservatoire he once varied the monotony of the class by drawing behind his book a picture of his teacher, whose most noticeable feature was a very large nose. Just as he had finished the sketch he was caught in the act and requested to show what he had been doing. The professor was evidently a man of considerable understanding and good-nature, for instead of being annoyed at the caricature he was highly delighted at the boy's skill and asked to be allowed to keep the sketch. Shortly after this he called on Mrs MacDowell, telling her that he had shown the drawing to an eminent painter who was also an

## MACDOWELL

---

instructor in the École des Beaux Arts, and that he had offered to give him a three years' course of free instruction under his own supervision. He even promised to be responsible for Edward's support during that time, so greatly impressed was he with the boy's talent.

This was a vital question to decide, and for a time the boy's whole future hung in the balance. At last in her perplexity Mrs MacDowell laid the whole matter before Marmontel, who strongly advised her against diverting her son from a musical career. The decision was finally left to Edward himself, and he chose to remain at the Conservatoire.

For two years more Edward continued to study at the Conservatoire, but his dissatisfaction at the methods taught there steadily grew and at last he felt that he must make a change. In the summer of 1878, the year of the Paris Exhibition, he attended a festival concert with his mother and heard Nicholas Rubinstein play the Tschai-kowsky Piano Concerto in B Flat Minor. His performance was a revelation, and as he left the hall Edward exclaimed to his mother: "I shall never learn to play the piano like that if I stay here."

Mother and son now began to study the relative merits of the various European schools of music, and finally decided to try Stuttgart. They went there in December, hoping that in this famous Conservatoire could be found the right kind of instruction. But alas! the young musician soon discovered that if he were to study here he would have to unlearn all that he had already learnt in Paris and begin again at the beginning—and even then the instruction was not very thorough!

They now turned their thoughts to Frankfort, where the composer Joachim Raff was the director of the Conservatoire and the brilliant pianist Karl Heymann was one of the instructors. After some months of delay, during



## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

which the young musician worked under the guidance of Ehlert, he began his studies in Frankfort, Raff teaching him composition and Heymann the playing of the piano. Both proved to be very inspiring teachers, and for Heymann he had the greatest admiration, marvelling at his technique. "In hearing him practise and play," he once said, "I learned more in a week than I ever knew before."

Edward remained at the Frankfort Conservatoire for two years in close study, his mother having in the meantime returned to America. He had at first hoped to obtain a post as teaching professor on the staff of the institution, but when he failed to do this he was successful in finding some private pupils, and thus was economically independent.

At this time he must have been rather a striking-looking youth. He was nineteen, tall and vigorous, with blue eyes, fair skin, ruddy complexion, very dark hair, and a reddish moustache. He was called by every one the "handsome American" and was a popular teacher, although he always remained painfully shy throughout his life.

In 1881, when he was twenty, MacDowell obtained the position of head pianoforte teacher in the Darmstadt Conservatoire. This meant forty hours a week of drudgery, and as he preferred to live in Frankfort he made the journey each day between the two towns. In addition to this he went once a week to a castle about three hours away to teach some little counts and countesses—they were really dull and sleepy children, who cared little, if anything, for music. But the twelve hours he spent in the train every week were not lost, for in them he composed the greater part of his Second Modern Suite for the piano (*Op.* 14), the First Modern Suite having been written in Frankfort the year before. At this period he was reading a great deal of poetry, both German and

## MACDOWELL

---

English, and delving into the folk-lore and fairy-lore of romantic Germany, and all these imaginative studies exercised a great influence on his subsequent compositions.

MacDowell began to find after a time that the cramping duties at Darmstadt were telling on his strength, and he therefore gave up his position there to remain in Frankfort as a private teacher, and in his spare time to compose. The concert engagements he had already filled had brought him in no money, but he strongly hoped that now he might find a few paying engagements. One day as he sat dreaming at his piano there was a knock at his door, and the next moment in walked his master Raff, of whom the young American stood in great awe. Raff suddenly asked his former pupil what he had been writing, and in confusion MacDowell stammered out that he had been working on a concerto. As the great man was on the point of leaving he told the young man to bring the concerto with him on the following Sunday as he would like to hear it. At that moment the first movement had not yet been written, and the author therefore set to work with great vigour to transfer his thoughts to paper. When Sunday came only the first movement was ready. Postponing the visit for a week or two, he had time to complete the work, which stands to-day almost without a correction as he wrote it then.

In the spring of 1882, at the suggestion of Raff, MacDowell paid a visit to Liszt. He had at first dreaded an encounter with the great master, but he was delightfully surprised at the cordiality and courtesy with which he was greeted. Eugène d'Albert, who was present, was asked to accompany the orchestral part of the concerto on a second piano, and afterward Liszt warned him: "You must bestir yourself if you do not wish to be outdone by our young American." Liszt warmly commended both MacDowell's composition and his piano-playing, and

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

it was in a very happy frame of mind that the young man returned to Frankfort.

At a musical convention held in Zurich in July 1882 MacDowell played his First Piano Suite with great success. In the following year, on Liszt's recommendation, both the First and Second Modern Suites were brought out by Breitkopf and Härtel. "Your two Piano Suites are admirable," wrote Liszt from Budapest in February 1883, "and I accept with sincere pleasure and thanks the dedication of your Piano Concerto."

The death of Raff on June 25, 1882, was a severe blow to MacDowell, and he wrote the first of his four great sonatas to the memory of his old teacher. The slow movement of the *Sonata Tragica* especially expresses his sorrow at the loss of the master who had once magnanimously declared to him: "Your music will be played when mine is forgotten."

During the next two years MacDowell composed a great many works. Then in June 1884 he returned to America, and in the following month married Miss Marian Nevins, who had been one of his private pupils in Frankfort some years earlier. They were ideally suited to one another, and the marriage proved a happy one in every way.

The young couple soon returned to Europe, and the winter of that year saw them established in Frankfort. MacDowell now occupied his time in giving a few private lessons, in composing, and in reading the literature of various countries; when spring came he would take long walks in the beautiful woods near the town. In the winter of 1885 he was at Wiesbaden, and in 1886 completed his Second Piano Concerto in D Minor.

In the spring of 1887, while out for a walk with the American composer Templeton Strong, MacDowell discovered a deserted cottage on the edge of the woods. It overlooked the town of Wiesbaden, with the Rhine

## MACDOWELL

---

beyond, and on the other side of the river were more woods. The romantic situation of the cottage tempted MacDowell to buy it, and for the next year he and his wife led an idyllic life in their little home. A small garden gave them outdoor exercise, the woods were always entrancing, and the composer was able to devote all his energies to his musical works. Many beautiful songs and piano pieces resulted from this sojourn in picturesque seclusion, in addition to the symphonic poem *Lamia*, *Hamlet and Ophelia*, the *Lovely Aldâ*, *Lancelot and Elaine*, and other orchestral works.

In September 1888 the MacDowells sold their Wiesbaden cottage and returned to America, settling in Boston. Here MacDowell soon acquired a name as a pianist and teacher, and he made a remarkable number of public appearances. He also created at this time some of his best works, including the two great Sonatas, the *Tragica* and the *Eroica*. One of his most important appearances was when he played the Second Concerto with the Philharmonic Orchestra in New York, under Anton Seidl, in December 1894.

In the spring of 1896 a department of music was founded at Columbia University in New York, and the professorship was offered to MacDowell. At first he hesitated, as he wished to weigh the offer carefully. He had now been living in Boston for eight years, and his fame as a pianist and teacher was constantly growing—indeed, more pupils came to him than he could accept. Then, again, the prospect of organizing a new department from its very inception was in itself a difficult task to undertake. But at last the thought of having an assured income caused him to decide in favour of Columbia, and in the following autumn he moved from Boston to New York.

MacDowell threw himself into his new work with great



## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

ardour and entire devotion. With the founding of the department there were two distinct ideas to be carried out: first, to train musicians who would be able to teach and compose; second, to teach musical history and æsthetics. All this involved five courses, with many lectures each week, including form, harmony, counterpoint, fugue, composition, vocal and instrumental music both from the technical and the interpretative sides. It was a tremendous labour to organize and maintain all these classes unaided.

After two years at Columbia MacDowell was granted an assistant, who took charge of the elementary classes. But even with this help MacDowell's labours were increasingly arduous, for he now had six courses instead of five, and this meant more classes and lectures each week. Perhaps the most severe drain on his strength and time was the continual correction of exercise-books and examination papers, which he always carried out with great patience and thoroughness. Added to all this, he devoted every Sunday morning to giving help and advice on their piano work and composition to his advanced students.

MacDowell found that his duties were so arduous that he must give up all thought of playing in public, but he steadily persevered with his compositions. During the eight years of the Columbia professorship he produced nearly one quarter of the whole of his published works, including some of his greatest compositions. Among the works of this period are the *Sea Pieces*, the *Norse* and the *Keltic Sonatas*, *Fireside Tales*, and *New England Idylls*. The *Woodland Sketches* and some of his finest songs had already been published.

In 1896 MacDowell bought some property near Peterboro, New Hampshire—fifteen acres of land with a small farmhouse and other buildings, and fifty acres of forest. The buildings were remodelled into a rambling but



## MACDOWELL

---

comfortable dwelling, and here, amid woods and hills, the composer loved to spend the summer of each year. In the woods close by he built a little log cabin, where he wrote some of his best music.

In 1904 MacDowell left Columbia, but he continued to give private lessons, and sometimes he admitted free such students as were unable to pay, but who showed considerable promise. He should, of course, have had a complete rest and change after his arduous labours at the university, for they had been a great drain on his vitality, and he was on the verge of a collapse. But he refused to take the necessary rest, although in the spring of 1905 he began to show definite signs of a serious nervous breakdown. He spent the following summer in Peterboro as usual, but it seemed to bring no relief to the exhausted composer, and in the autumn his condition grew steadily worse. Finally, though perfectly healthy physically, his mind gradually seemed to weaken and at last became like that of a child. One of the ineffaceable memories of the author of this book is a visit paid to MacDowell in one of the last years of his life, when, seated in a large easy-chair, and clad in a cool white summer suit, he remained in dreamy attitude hardly noticing what was passing all around him, but every now and then responding with a gentle pressure of his hand to the solicitude of the devoted wife who was constantly by his side.

For more than two years MacDowell remained in this state of mental passivity, until death gave him his release on January 23, 1908, shortly after he had entered his forty-seventh year. Through his long illness the old Westminster Hotel had been his home, and after his death a simple service was held in St George's Episcopal Church near by. The next day his body was taken to Peterboro, his summer home, a spot afterward destined

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

to play its part in the development of music in America due to the untiring efforts of Mrs MacDowell. Of the last resting-place of the composer Mr Gilman writes :

“ His grave is on an open hill-top, commanding one of the spacious and beautiful views he had loved. On a bronze tablet are these lines of his own, used as a motto for his *From a Log Cabin*, the last music he ever wrote :

A house of dreams untold,  
It looks out over the whispering tree-tops  
And faces the setting sun.”

## XXII

### CLAUDE-ACHILLE DEBUSSY

(1862-1918)

IT is difficult to learn anything of the boyhood and youth of this rare French composer. Even his young manhood and later years were so guarded and secluded that few outside his intimate circle knew much of the man except what was mirrored in his music. But, after all, that was his own desire: his work alone reflects his character, aims, and ideals, and through his compositions he reveals himself to the world.

Claude-Achille Debussy was born at Saint-Germain-en-Laye on August 22, 1862. From the very beginning he seemed to be precociously gifted in music, and he studied the pianoforte at a very early age. His first lessons he received from Madame de Sivry, a former pupil of Chopin. At ten years of age he entered the Paris Conservatoire, obtaining his Solfège medals in 1874, 1875, and 1876, under Lavignac; a second prize for piano-playing from Marmontel in 1877; a first prize for accompanying in 1880; an accessory prize for counterpoint and fugue in 1882; and finally the Grand Prix de Rome, with his cantata *L'Enfant Prodigue*, in 1884, as a pupil of Guirand.

Thus, at the age of twenty-two, the young musician was thoroughly equipped with a career. He had worked his way carefully up to the top, with thoroughness and completeness, gaining his honours slowly step by step. All this painstaking care, this overcoming of the technical difficulties of his art, is what gave him such complete

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

command and freedom in using the medium of tone and harmony in his unique manner.

While at work in Paris young Debussy made an occasional journey to another country. In 1879 he visited Russia, where he learned to know the music of that land before it had achieved popularity among other nations. While in Rome he composed a symphonic suite, *Le Printemps*, and a lyric poem for a woman's voice with chorus and orchestra entitled *La Demoiselle Éluë*.

From the first Claude Debussy showed himself a rare spirit, regarding his art in a different light from that of other musicians. Nature he loved with a whole-hearted devotion, and his compositions constantly reflect her moods and inspirations. He once said:

"I prefer to hear a few notes from an Egyptian shepherd's flute, for he is in accord with his scenery and hears harmonies unknown to your treatises. Musicians too seldom turn to the music inscribed in nature. It would benefit them more to watch a sunrise than to listen to a performance of the *Pastoral Symphony*. Go not to others for advice, but take counsel of the passing breezes, which relate the history of the world to those who can listen."

Again, he wrote in a way that showed what delight he felt in spontaneous and natural beauty:

"I lingered late one autumn evening in the country, irresistibly fascinated by the magic of old-world forests. From yellowing leaves, fluttering earthward, celebrating the glorious agony of the trees, from the clangorous angelus bidding the fields to slumber, rose a sweet persuasive voice counselling perfect oblivion. Beasts and men turned peacefully homeward, having accomplished their impersonal tasks."

When as a youth Debussy was serving with his regiment in France he experienced great delight in listening to the tones of the bugles and the bells. The former

## DEBUSSY

---

sounded over the camp for the various military duties; the latter belonged to a neighbouring convent and rang out daily for services. The resonance of the bugles and the far-reaching vibrations of the bells, with their overtones and harmonics, were specially noted by the young musician and used by him later in his music.

It is a well-known fact that every tone or sound is accompanied by a whole series of other sounds; they are the vibrations resulting from the fundamental tone. If the tone C is played in the lower octave of the piano no less than sixteen overtones vibrate with it. A few of these are audible to the ordinary listener, but very keen ears will hear more. In Claude Debussy's compositions his system of harmony and tonality is intimately connected with these laws of natural harmonics. His chords, for instance, are remarkable for their shifting, elusive quality; they seem to be on the borderland between major and minor—consonance and dissonance; at times they seem to float in the air without any resolution at all.

Debussy thus created a new aspect of music, a new style of chord progression. But he did not neglect old forms. He was exceedingly well versed in old and ancient music; he knew all the old scales—eight in number—and used them in his compositions with compelling charm. The influence of the old Gregorian chant has given his music a certain fluidity, free rhythm, refinement, richness, and variety which is peculiarly its own. The composer expressed his own attitude toward worn-out styles of composition in the words: "Art is always progressive; it cannot return to the past, which is definitely dead. Only imbeciles and cowards look backward. Then—let us work!"

As a student in Rome Debussy threw himself into the study of the music of Russian composers, especially that of Moussorgsky, and traces of the Oriental colouring



## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

derived from these masters appear in his own late music. When he returned to Paris he reflected in his works the atmosphere of his artistic environment. He sympathized with the impressionist school in art, whether in painting, literature, or music, and in his works the qualities of impressionism and symbolism are strongly represented. He employed sounds as though they were colours, blending them in such a way as to seem to paint a picture in tones through a series of shaded, many-hued chord progressions. Fluid, flexible, vivid, these beautiful harmonies, seemingly woven of refracted rays of light, merge into shadowy melody and free, flowing rhythm.

In Debussy's music one first notes the strangeness of the harmony, the use of certain scales which are not so much new as unfamiliar. Then there is his constant use of the sequences of fifths or seconds. His subjects are often taken from nature, but the skies he depicts are less vividly blue and his landscapes more atmospheric than those of Italy and more like his native France. His music reveals a sense of proportion, balance, and the most exquisite taste; it may at times lack strength, it may lack outbursts of passion and intensity, but it is the perfection of refinement.

Mr Ernest Newman, in writing of Debussy, warmly praises the delightful naturalness of his early compositions: "One would feel justified in building the highest hopes on the young genius who can manipulate so easily the beautiful shapes his imagination conjures up."

The work of his early period shows Debussy developing freely and naturally. The independence of his thinking is unmistakable, but it does not run into wilfulness. There is no violent break with the traditions of the past, but there is the quickening of certain French qualities by the infusion of a new personality. It is as if a new and charming miniaturist had appeared, who was doing both

## DEBUSSY

---

for piano and song what had never been done before. The style of the two Arabesques and the more successful of the *Ariettes Oubliées* is perfect. A liberator seemed to have come to the musical world, half a century later, to take up the work of Chopin—the work of redeeming the art from the excessive objectivity of German thought, of giving it not only a new soul, but a new body, swift, lithe, and graceful. And that this exquisitely clear, pellucid style could be made to express not only gaiety and whimsicality, but emotion of a deeper sort, is proved by the lovely *Clair de Lune*.

Among Debussy's best-known compositions is his *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*, composed in 1894. Its first performance in England was in 1904, and the popularity of this composition has never waned from that time; it is usually regarded as his most faultless orchestral attempt. He has also written three Nocturnes for the orchestra.

In piano music, as has already been noted, he created a new school for the player. All the way from the two Arabesques through *Jardins sous la Pluie*, *La Cathédrale Engloutie*, *Une Nuit en Granada*, *La Fille aux Cheveux de Lin*, up to the two books of remarkable Preludes, it is a new world of exotic melody and harmony to which he leads the way. "Art must be hidden by art," said Rameau long ago, and this is eminently true of Debussy's music.

Debussy composed several works for the stage, one of which was *Le Martyr de Saint-Sébastien*, but his *Pelléas et Mélisande* is his one supreme achievement in the lyric drama. As one of his critics has written: "The reading of the score of *Pelléas et Mélisande* remains for me one of the most marvellous lessons in French art: it would be impossible for me to express more with greater restraint of means." The music, which seems so complicated, is in reality very simple. It has a shadowy and ethereal sound, but it is really built up with as sure

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

control as the most classic work. It is indeed music which appeals to refined and sensitive temperaments.

The mystical opera was produced at the Opéra-Comique in Paris in April 1902, and at once made a sensation. It was performed a great number of times, and it still continues to be one of the first favourites of the French stage. In New York a first performance was given in 1907 with a notable cast of operatic singers, Mary Garden as the heroine giving an unforgettable, poetic interpretation.

Debussy was especially fond of poetry, and steeped himself in the verse of Verlaine, Villon, Baudelaire, and Mallarmé, and he has left us many songs. He chose the most unexpected, the most subtle, poems and wedded them to sounds which invariably expressed the full meaning of the words. He breathed life into these vague, shadowy poems, making them live again as he had done Maeterlinck's *Pelléas*.

As the years passed Claude Debussy won more and more distinction as a unique composer; he also gained an unenviable reputation for his lack of sociability. In his youth he is said to have resembled an Assyrian prince in appearance, and throughout life he retained his somewhat Asiatic appearance. His black hair curled lightly over an extremely broad forehead, and his eyes were slightly narrowed. He spoke seldom, and often in brusque phrase. For this reason he was frequently misunderstood, as the irony and sarcasm with which he sometimes spoke did not tend to make friends. But this attitude he preserved only toward those who did not understand him and his ideals, or who endeavoured to falsify what he believed in and held in esteem.

A friend of the composer's wrote not long ago:

"I met Claude Debussy for the first time in 1906. Living myself in a provincial town, I had for several years known and greatly admired some of the songs and the

## DEBUSSY

---

opera *Pelléas et Mélisande*, and I made each of my short visits to Paris an opportunity of improving my acquaintance with these works. A young composer, André Caplet, with whom I had long been intimate, proposed to introduce me to Debussy; but the rumours I had heard about the composer's preferred seclusion always made me refuse, in spite of my great desire to know him. I now had a wish to express the feelings awakened in me, and to communicate to others, by means of articles and lectures, my admiration for, and my belief in, the composer and his work. The result was that one day, in 1906, Debussy let me know through a friend that he would like to see me. From that day began our friendship."

Later he continued:

"Debussy was invited to appear at the Queen's Hall with the London Symphony Orchestra on February 1, 1908, to conduct his *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* and *La Mer*. The ovation he received from the English public was exceptional. I can still see him in the vestibule, shaking hands with friends after the concert, trying to hide his emotion, and saying repeatedly: 'How nice they are—how nice they are!'"

In the following year Debussy again visited London, but the state of his health forbade all further travel. He had been attacked when in his prime by a malady which gradually sapped his energies, and now he found himself obliged to give up all attempts at work. Thus many compositions which he might have given to the world remain for ever uncreated—one in especial we may regret, a *Tristan* which he had hoped to compose according to the old French legend of Tristan and Iseult. He regarded the story as a heritage of France and wished to restore it to the original atmosphere and idea.

The *Tristan*, we know, was never accomplished, and yet there must be some works of Debussy that still remain

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

unpublished although existing in manuscript form. It is known that the composer was wont to keep his works in his desk for some time, correcting them and letting them ripen, until he felt that they were ready for publication.

Debussy died on March 26, 1918, in his fifty-sixth year. His exact position in the world of music still awaits the verdict of time, though the genius is acknowledged of the man who declared : " I love music too much to speak of it otherwise than passionately."



## INDEX

- Agoult, Marie Catherine Sophie de Flavigny, Comtesse d' ("Daniel Stern") (1805-76), 159, 189-190
- Albert, Eugène Francis Charles d' (b. 1864), 275
- Albrechtsberger, Johann Georg (1736-1809), 92
- Ariosti, Attilio (1666-c. 1740), 31
- Arnaud, Abbé François (1721-84), 47
- Arnould, Sophie (1744-1802), 46
- Bach, Johann Ambrosius (1645-95), 17
- Bach, Johann Christoph (1671-1721), 17-19
- BACH, JOHANN SEBASTIAN (1685-1750), story-life of, 17-27
- Bach, Karl Philipp Emanuel (1714-1788), 26
- Barry, Madame du, her opposition to Gluck, 46
- BEETHOVEN, LUDWIG VAN (1770-1827), story-life of, 86-96; his criticism of Weber's *Euryanthe*, 105; Schubert's visits to, 116-117; his manuscript writing, 123; encouragement of Liszt, 182-183; his monument in Bonn, 190
- Benedict, Sir Julius (1804-85), 121-122
- BERLIOZ, HECTOR (1803-69), story-life of, 163-176; his friendship with Liszt, 188
- BRAHMS, JOHANNES (1833-97), story-life of, 231-247; meets Schumann, 145-146
- Brandt, Caroline, wife of Karl Weber, 101, 102
- Bull, Ole Borneman (1810-80), 250, 252
- Bülów, Cosima von, wife of von Bülow, and later of Wagner, 190, 219
- Bülów, Hans Guido von (1830-94), 218-219, 263, 266
- Buononcini, Giovanni Battista (1672-c. 1750), 31, 36
- Buxtehude, Dietrich (1637-1707), 18, 22
- Calzabigi, Raniero da (1714-95), 44
- Cannabich, Christian (1731-98), 78
- Chabrier, Alexis Emmanuel (1841-1894), 229-230
- Cherubini, Maria Luigi Carlo Zenobia Salvatore (1760-1842), 167, 183, 223
- Chezy, Helmina Christiane von (1783-1856), 104
- CHOPIN, FRÉDÉRIC-FRANÇOIS (1810-49), story-life of, 147-162; meets Liszt, 188
- Cuzzoni, Francesca (1700-70), 36
- Czerny, Karl (1791-1857), 92, 181
- Davidsbündlerschaft, group of young musicians led by Schumann, 139-141
- DEBUSSY, CLAUDE-ACHILLE (1862-1918), story-life of, 281-288
- Diabelli, Antonio (1781-1858), 116
- Donizetti, Gaetano (1797-1848), 203
- Dorn, Heinrich Ludwig Egmon (1804-92), 138, 210
- Elsner, Joseph Xaver (1769-1854), 149, 154
- Érard, Sébastien (1752-1831), 184, 186
- Formes, Karl Johann (1816-89), 234

# STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

- FRANCK, CÉSAR (1822-90), story-life of, 222-230  
 Frederick the Great, meeting with Bach, 26  
 Froberger, Johann Jakob (1605-67), 18  
 Fux, Johann Joseph (1660-1741), 54
- Gade, Niels Wilhelm (1817-90), 252  
 Garcia, Michelle Ferdinande Pauline Viardot- (1821-1910), 160, 223  
 George I as patron of Handel, 31, 34, 38  
 GLUCK, CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD (1714-87), story-life of, 41-50; his influence on Berlioz, 165  
 Goethe, Johann Wolfgang (1749-1832), 122-123, 128  
 GRIEG, EDVARD HAGERUP (1843-1907), story-life of, 248-259  
 Guadagni, Gaetano (*c.* 1725-*c.* 1797), 44  
 Gutmann, Adolph (1819-82), 157, 159
- HÄNDEL, GEORG FRIEDRICH (1685-1759), story-life of, 28-40; denounces work of Gluck, 44  
 HAYDN, FRANZ JOSEF (1732-1809), story-life of, 51-64; meeting with Mozart, 82; encouragement of Beethoven, 90-91; gives lessons to Beethoven, 92  
 Haydn, Johann Michael (1737-1806), 55-56, 61  
 Hensel, William (1794-1861), 128  
 Heymann, Karl (*b.* 1854), 273-274  
 Hiller, Ferdinand (1811-85), 145, 155-156, 169  
 Hummel, Johann Nepomuk (1778-1837), 96
- Joachim, Josef (1831-1907), 236-245
- Kalkbrenner, Friedrich Wilhelm Michael (*c.* 1784-1849), 152, 155-156  
 Kemble, Charles (1775-1854), 106  
 Kupsch, Karl Gustav (*d.* 1846), 138
- Lassus, Orlandus (1530-94), 14  
 Lavigna, Vincenzo (1777-1837), 197-198  
 Lefébure-Wély, Louis James Alfred (1817-69), 161  
 Lind, Jenny (1820-87), 129, 145, 203  
 Liszt, Adam (*d.* 1827), 177-186  
 LISZT, FRANZ (1811-86), story-life of, 177-191; praises Schubert, 108; introduces George Sand to Chopin, 159; his friendship with Wagner, 214-216; meetings with Grieg, 254-256; visited by MacDowell, 275-276
- MACDOWELL, EDWARD ALEXANDER (1861-1908), story-life of, 271-280  
 Manzoni, Alessandro (1785-1873), 204  
 Marchand, Louis (1669-1732), 24  
 Marie Antoinette, her delight in Gluck's compositions, 45-46, 48, 49; meets Mozart as a child, 71  
 Marmontel, Antoine François (1816-1898), 272, 281  
 Martini, Padre Giambattista (1706-1784), 42, 74  
 Marxsen, Eduard (1806-87), 232-233, 235  
 Mayrhofer, Johann (1787-1836), 112, 113  
 Méhul, Étienne Henri (1763-1817), 102, 226  
 Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, Fanny Cécile (1805-47), 119, 120, 124, 128, 130-131  
 MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY, JAKOB LUDWIG FELIX (1809-47), story-life of, 118-131; mentioned by Chopin, 151; meets Chopin, 255, criticism of Chopin, 157  
 Metastasio, Pietro Antonio Domenico Bonaventura (1698-1782), 57  
 Meyerbeer, Giacomo (1791-1864), 211  
 Moke, Marie Felicité Denise (1811-1875), 169-171  
 Moscheles, Ignatz (1794-1870), 134, 152, 185, 250

# INDEX

- Mozart, Leopold (1719-87), 65-83  
Mozart, Marianne (1751-1829), 65 ff.  
MOZART, WOLFGANG AMADEUS  
CHRYSOSTOM (1756-91), story-life  
of, 65-85; visited by Beethoven,  
89  
Neeffe, Christian Gottlob (1748-98),  
88  
Neruda, Wilma Maria Francisca  
Normann (1839-1911), 253  
*Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, musical  
paper founded by Schumann, 139  
Nordraak, Rikard (1842-66), 252-  
253  
Paër, Ferdinando (1771-1839), 183  
Paganini, Niccolò (1782-1840), 172,  
173, 188  
PALESTRINA, GIOVANNI PIERLUIGI  
SANTE DA (c. 1526-94), story-life  
of, 11-16  
Piccinni, Nicola (1728-1800), 46-49  
Pleyel, Camille (1788-1855), 156-  
157, 171  
Porpora, Niccolò Antonio (1686-  
1766), 58, 59  
Provesi, Ferdinand (d. 1833), 195-  
196, 198  
Raff, Joseph Joachim (1822-82), 273-  
276  
Reicha, Anton (1770-1836), 185  
Reinken, Johann Adam (1623-1722),  
20  
Reményi, Eduard (1830-98), 235-  
236  
Reutter, Johann Adam Karl Georg  
(1708-72), 53-54  
Richter, Johann Paul Friedrich ("Jean  
Paul") (1763-1825), 135, 138  
Rossi, Gaetano (1780-1855), 200,  
202  
Rossini, Gioacchino Antonio (1792-  
1868), 204  
Rubinstein, Anton Gregorovitch  
(1830-94), 262, 264  
Rubinstein, Nicholas Gregorovitch  
(1835-81), 263, 266, 268, 273  
Salieri, Antonio (1750-1825), 112,  
181  
Salomon, Johann Peter (1745-1815),  
62, 63  
"Sand, George" (Madame Dude-  
vant) (1804-76), her attachment to  
Chopin, 155, 158-160, 189  
Schindler, Anton Felix (1795-1864),  
182  
Schober, Franz (1798-1883), 112-  
114  
Schröder-Devrient, Wilhelmine (1804-  
60), 209, 213  
Schubert, Ferdinand (1794-1859),  
110, 112, 117  
SCHUBERT, FRANZ PETER (1797-  
1828), story-life of, 108-117;  
attends Beethoven's funeral, 96;  
Schumann's enthusiasm for, 136  
Schubert, Ignaz (1784-1844), 109,  
110  
SCHUMANN, ROBERT ALEXANDER  
(1810-56), story-life of, 132-146;  
his admiration for Chopin, 157;  
acquaintance with Brahms, 237-  
239  
Silbermann, Gottfried (1683-1753),  
26  
Smithson, Henrietta Constance (1800-  
1854), 168, 171-175  
Sontag, Henrietta, Countess Rossi  
(1806-54), 105  
Spontini, Gasparo Luigi Pacifico  
(1774-1851), 151  
TSCHAIKOWSKY, PETER ILYITCH  
(1840-93), story-life of, 260-270  
VERDI, GIUSEPPE (1813-1901),  
story-life of, 192-205  
Vivaldi, Antonio (c. 1680-1743), 21  
Vogl, Johann Michael (1768-1840),  
113-115  
Vogler, Abbé Georg Joseph (1749-  
1814), 99, 100  
WAGNER, WILHELM RICHARD  
(1813-83), story-life of, 206-221;  
his fame spread by Liszt, 190

## STORY-LIVES OF MASTER MUSICIANS

---

- Waldstein, Count Ferdinand Ernst  
Gabriel (1762-1823), patron of  
Beethoven, 90
- Weber, Franz Anton von (1734-  
1812), 97
- WEBER, KARL MARIA FRIEDRICH  
ERNST VON (1786-1826), story-  
life of, 97-107; his meeting with  
Mendelssohn, 120-121; proposed  
as Schumann's teacher, 135; his  
friendship with Wagner, 207
- Weinlig, Christian Theodor (1780-  
1842), 208
- Wieck, Clara Josephine (1819-96),  
wife of Schumann, 135-136, 139,  
140-146, 238-246
- Wieck, Friedrich (1785-1873), 135,  
136, 137-139
- Zachau, Friedrich Wilhelm (1663-  
1712), 30-31, 33, 35
- Zaremba, Professor Nikolai Ivanovitch  
(1821-79), 262, 264
- Zelter, Karl Friedrich (1758-1832),  
120, 122-126, 151









